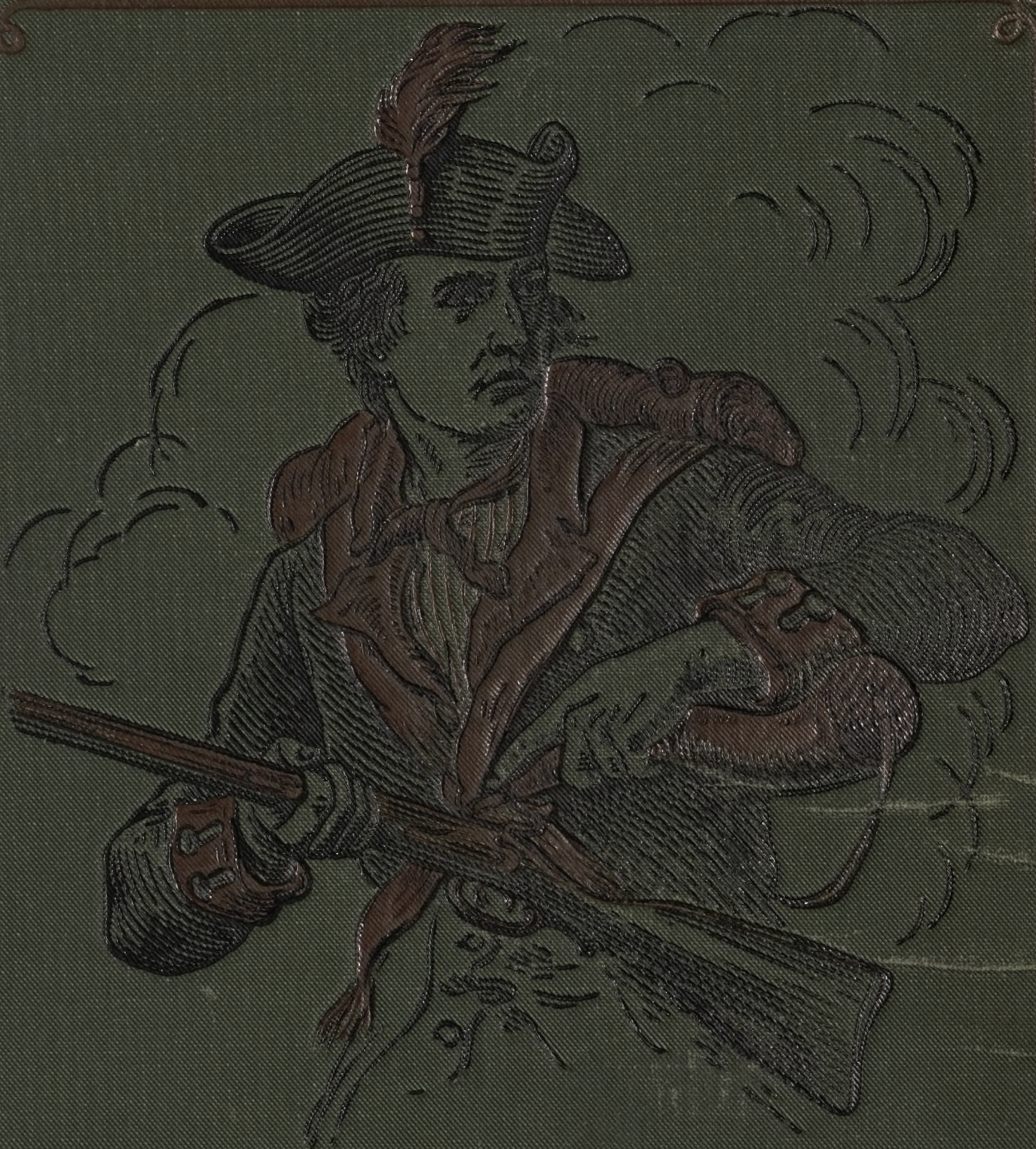
CORPORAL LIGE'S RECRUIT

BY JAMES OTIS



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THE OLD MAN MARCHED DOWN THE STREET WITH SUCH A SWAGGER AS HE EVIDENTLY BELIEVED BEFITTING A SOLDIER.

Corporal 'Lige's Recruit, p. 27.

CORPORAL 'LIGE'S RECRUIT.

A Story of Crown Point and Ticonderoga.

By JAMES OTIS.

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CORPORAL 'LIGE'S RECRUIT.

CHAPTER I.

RECRUITING.

THERE was great excitement among the citizens of the town of Pittsfield in the province of Massachusetts on the first day of May in the year 1775.

Master Edward Mott and Noah Phelps, forming a committee appointed by the Provincial Assembly of Connecticut, had arrived on the previous evening charged with an important commission, the making known of which had so aroused the inhabitants of the peaceful settlement that it was as if the reports of the muskets fired at Lexington and Concord were actually ringing in their ears.

These two gentlemen had with them a

following of sixteen men, equipped as if for battle, and the arrival of so large an armed body had aroused the curiosity of the good people until all were painfully eager to learn the reason for what seemed little less than an invasion.

When it was whispered around that Master Mott and Phelps had, immediately upon their arrival, inquired for Colonel James Easton and Master John Brown, and were even then closeted with those citizens, the more knowing ones predicted that this coming had much to do with the warlike preparations that were making in Boston and New York, designed to put a check upon the unlawful doings of his majesty the king.

When morning came, that is to say, on this first day of May, it was generally understood throughout the settlement that the Provincial Assembly of Connecticut had agreed upon a

plan to seize the munitions of war at Ticonderoga for the use of that body of men known as the American army, then gathered at Cambridge and Roxbury in the province of Massachusetts.

The gossips of Pittsfield stated that one thousand dollars had been advanced from the Provincial Treasury of Connecticut to pay the expenses of the expedition; that the sixteen men making up the following of the committee were recruits who had pledged themselves to capture this important fortress which formed the key of communication between New York and the Canadas, and that they proposed to march through the country to Shoreham, opposite Ticonderoga, recruiting as they went, with the belief that on arriving there their force would be sufficiently large to capture the fort.

The boys as well as the men were highly

excited, as was but natural, by such rumors, and a certain Isaac Rice, who prided himself upon being fourteen years old, instead of gathering with his companions, listening eagerly to every word which dropped from the lips of the older members of the community, conceived the idea of applying to what he believed to be the fountain-head of all information regarding military matters.

This supposedly wise man was none other than Corporal Elijah Watkins, generally known as "Corporal 'Lige," sometimes spoken of as "Master Watkins;" but always to Isaac Rice, "the corporal."

He was looked upon as an old man when he served under Abercrombie at Ticonderoga in '58, and believed of a surety he was as well informed in military affairs as Isaac Rice, his ardent disciple, fancied him to be.

Ever ready to give advice on important matters; not backward about criticising the alleged mistakes of his superiors, and holding himself as with the idea that during the late troubles with the French he had learned all the art of warfare; but yet with such possibly disagreeable qualities, Corporal 'Lige had shown himself to be a brave soldier, willing at any time to do more even than was his duty.

The old man was sitting outside the door of a tiny log building which he called home, smoking peacefully, much as he might have done had the committee from Connecticut never passed that way, and this apparent indifference surprised the boy.

"Why, corporal, don't you know what's going on in the town? Haven't you heard that they are talking of taking the fort at Ticonderoga, and running the king out of the country?"

"First and foremost, Isaac lad, are you so ignorant as to think the king is here in this 'ere province to be run out? An' then agin, can't you realize that talkin's one thing an' doin's another?"

"Yes; but, corporal, haven't you heard the news?"

"If you mean so far as concerns the committee from Connecticut, Isaac, I have heard it, and what's more, Master Noah Phelps talked with me before ever he went to see Colonel Easton. He knew where he could get information about Ticonderoga, for bless your soul, lad, wasn't I there in '58? An' would you find a stick or stone around the place that I can't call to mind?"

"Did Master Phelps come to see you first?"

"Well, yes, lad, it 'mounted to much the same thing. I was down the road when he come into town, an' seein' me he acted like

as if a great load had been lifted off his shoulders, 'cause he knowed I could tell him a thing or two if I was minded. 'Good-evenin' to you, Corporal 'Lige,' he said sweet as honey in the honeycomb, and I passed the time of day with him, kind of suspicionin' something of this same business was goin' on. 'Want to take a little trip up through the country?' he asked friendly-like, and do you know, lad, the whole plan come to me in a minute, an' I says to him, says I, 'Master Phelps, you can count me in, if it so be yo're goin' toward the lakes.' 'That's where we're bound for, Corporal 'Lige,' says he, 'and I'll put your name down.' I said, says I, 'It's rations, an' somethin' in the way of pay, I reckon?' an' he allowed as that part of it would be all fixed, especially with me, 'cause you see, lad, it wouldn't be much good for these people what never knew any-

thing 'bout war, to start out leavin' me behind. Why, bless your heart, I allow that's why they come through Pittsfield, jest for the purpose of seein' Corporal 'Lige."

The old man ceased speaking to puff dense volumes of smoke from his pipe, and Isaac Rice gazed at him in wonder and amaze.

That the committee from Connecticut had visited the town for the sole and only reason of inducing the corporal to join the force, there was no question in his mind, and now, more implicitly than ever before, did he believe that throughout all the provinces there could be found no abler soldier than Corporal 'Lige.

"Yes, lad, I'm goin' with the committee, more to tell 'em what they ought to do, as you might say, than to serve as a private soldier, for you see I know Ticonderoga root and branch. I could tell you the whole story

from the meanin' of the name down to who is in command of it this very minute, if there was time."

"But there is, corporal. The committee are talkin' to Colonel Easton and Master Brown now, and don't count on leaving here before to-morrow."

"What do they want of the colonel?"

"I don't know; but they are stopping at his house."

"I ain't sayin' but that the colonel is as good a soldier as you'll find around here; but bless your soul, lad, though it ain't for me to say it, he could learn considerable from Corporal 'Lige if he was to spend a few hours every now and then listenin'."

"But tell me all you can about Ticonderoga, corporal."

The old man looked around furtively as if half-expecting the committee from Connecti-

cut, or Colonel Easton, might be coming to ask his advice on some disputed point, and then, shaking his forefinger now and again at the lad much as though to prevent contradiction, he began:

"In the first place the folks 'round here call it 'Ticonderoga' when it ain't anything of the kind. The real name is 'Cheonderoga,' which is Iroquois lingo for 'Sounding Water,' being called so, I allow, because the falls at Lake George make a deal of noise. The French built breastworks there in '55, which they christened Fort Carillon. Now you see it's a mighty strong place owin' to the situation, and its bein' located on a point which, so I've heard said, rises more'n a hundred feet above the level of the water. The solid part of it—that is to say, the land—is only about five hundred acres. Three sides are surrounded by water, an' in the rear is a swamp. That

much for the advantages of the spot, so to speak. Now I was there in July of '58 when Montcalm held the fort with four thousand men. Lord Howe was second in command of General Abercrombie's forces, and Major Putnam, down here, was with the crowd. That's when the major wouldn't let his lordship go into the battle first; but banged right along ahead until we come to the first breastworks, finding it so strong that the troops were marched back to the landin' place and went into bivouac for the night. It was the sixth day of July; on the eighth we tried it again; but the fort couldn't be carried, an' the blood that was shed there, lad, all under the British flag, would come pretty nigh drownin' every man, woman an' child in this 'ere settlement. On the twenty-sixth of July in the year 1759, General Amherst with eleven thousand men scared the French out;

they didn't fire a gun, but abandoned the fortification and fled to Crown Point. Since that time the king's forces have held it."

"How many are there now?" Isaac asked, not so much for the purpose of gaining information as to tempt the old man to continue his story.

"I can't rightly say, lad, though it's somewhere in the neighborhood of fifty. The commandant is, or was when I last heard, one Captain Delaplace, and it is said that he's a thorough soldier, though I'm allowin' he hasn't got any too much of a force with him."

"Do you think the Connecticut gentlemen can raise men enough between here and there to take a fort which resisted General Abercrombie's entire army?"

"That remains to be seen, lad. If they are willin' to act on such advice as can be got

from some people hereabouts, I allow there's a good chance for it, more especially if the Green Mountain boys take a hand in the matter, as Master Phelps thinks probable. In that case Colonel Ethan Allen would most likely be in command."

"And you are really going, corporal?" asked Isaac.

"Yes, lad, it don't seem as though I ought to hang back back when I'm needed. If all we hear from the other provinces is true, you'll be old enough to take a hand in the scrimmage before the fightin's over, so here's a chance to serve an apprenticeship. If it so be you're of the mind I'll take you under my wing, an' by the time we get back you'll have a pretty decently good idea of a soldier's trade."

"Do you really mean it, corporal?" and Isaac sprang to his feet in excitement. "Do

you really mean that I may go with you just as if I was of age to carry a gun?"

"Ay, lad, if it so be your mother an' father are willin', an' I can't see why they shouldn't agree, seein's how they know the company you'll be in. It would seem different if you talked of goin' with the general run of recruits, who are green hands at this kind of work."

"But will the committee allow a lad of my age to go as a soldier?"

"Isaac, my boy, when Corporal 'Lige says to Master Phelps, says he, 'This 'ere lad is goin' under my wing, so to speak,' why bless your heart, that's the end of the whole business. They've got to have me, an' won't stand out about your joinin' when it's known my heart is set on it."

"Will you come now while I ask my mother?"

"Well, lad, I ain't prepared to say as how I will; but this much I'm promisin': Go to her an' find out how she's feelin' about the matter. If there's any waverin' in her mind I'll step in—you see I'll be the reserves in this case—an' when I charge she's bound to surrender. But if it so happens that she's dead set against it at the start, why, you had best not vex her by tryin' to push the matter."

Having perfect faith in the corporal's wisdom Isaac was thoroughly satisfied with this decision, and after the old man had promised to await his return at that point, the lad set out for home at full speed.

Perhaps if Isaac had been the only son of his mother he would have found it difficult to gain her permission for such an adventure as Corporal 'Lige had proposed.

There were five other boys in the family,

and Isaac was neither the oldest nor the youngest.

The fact that Mrs. Rice had so many did not cause her to be unmindful of any, but less timorous perhaps, about parting with one.

However it may be, the lad gained the desired permission providing his father would assent, and this last was little more than a formality.

Master Rice was found among the throng of citizens in front of the inn where recruiting was going on briskly.

The opportunity served to give the good man a certain semblance of patriotism when he showed himself willing that one of his sons should go for a soldier, and he would have had the boy sign the rolls then and there, but that Isaac demurred.

It was not in his mind to enlist save in the

company and after being again assured of the corporal's protection, therefore he insisted on presenting himself as the old man's recruit rather than his father's offering.

Corporal 'Lige was well pleased when Isaac returned with a detailed account of all that had taken place, and said approvingly:

"You have shown yourself to be a lad of rare discretion, Isaac Rice, and I will take it upon myself to see that such forethought brings due reward. Suppose you had signed the rolls at the inn? What would you be then? Nothin' more than a private."

"But that is all I shall be when I sign them with you, corporal."

"It may appear that way, I'm free to admit lad; but still you will be a deal higher than any non-commissioned officer, because you'll be under my wing, and when we have taken Ticonderoga, though I ain't admitting that's

the proper name of the fort—when we've taken that, I say, you'll be fit for any kind of a commission that you're qualified to hold."

"Yes," Isaac replied doubtfully, and then he fell to speculating as to whether even though Corporal 'Lige did not "take him under his wing," he might not be fit to fill any position for which "he was qualified."

While he was thus musing a messenger came from Master Phelps saying the recruiting was coming to an end in this town, and the party would set out that same afternoon on their way to Bennington, expecting to enlist volunteers from Colonel Easton's regiment of militia as they passed through the country.

"Never you fear but that I'll be right at my post of duty when the command is given to form ranks," Corporal 'Lige said to the messenger, and after the latter had departed

he added as he turned to the boy, "Now, Isaac, lad, you can see what they think of Corporal 'Lige. Colonel Easton and Master Brown are hangin' 'round the inn instead of waitin' for the committee to visit them. An' what do I do? Why, I stay quietly here, knowin' they can't well get along without me, an' instead of coolin' my heels among a lot of raw recruits, I'm sent for when the time is come, as if I was a staff officer. That's one thing you want to bear in mind. If you don't count yourself of any importance, other people are mighty apt to pass you by as a ne'er-do-well."

"But I haven't enlisted yet, corporal."

"Of course you have. When you said to me 'I'm ready to go as your apprentice in this 'ere business,' it was jest the same as if you'd signed the rolls. I'll arrange all that matter with Master Phelps, my lad. Now do you

hasten home; get what you can pick up in the way of an outfit; borrow your father's gun, and kind of mention the fact to your mother that the more she gives in the way of provisions the better you'll be fed, for you an' me are likely to mess together."

"How much are you going to take, corporal?"

"That will depend a good deal on what kind of a supply your mother furnishes. I'm willin' to admit she's nigh on to as good a cook as can be found in Pittsfield, an' will take my chances on what she puts up for you, providin' there's enough of it."

"Of course you are to take your musket?"

"I should be a pretty poor kind of a soldier if I didn't, lad—the same one I used under Abercrombie," and he pointed with his thumb toward the interior of the dwelling where, as Isaac knew, a well-worn weapon

hung on hooks just over the fireplace. "It's one of the king's arms, an' I reckon will do as good service against him as it did for him, which is saying considerable, lad, as Major Putnam can vouch for. Now set about making ready, for we two above all others must not be behind-hand when the column moves."

A fine thing it was to be a soldier, so Isaac thought as he went leisurely from Corporal 'Lige's log hut to his home; he was forced to pass through the entire length of the village, stopping here and there to acquaint a friend with what he believed to be a most important fact.

Among all the lads in Pittsfield of about his own age he was the only one who proposed to enlist, and from all he heard and saw there could be no question but that he was envied by his companions.

From the youngest boy to the oldest man, the citizens were in such a ferment of excitement as gave recruits the idea that to enlist was simply providing amusement for themselves during a certain number of days, and, with the exception of those experienced in such matters, no person believed for a moment that the brave ones who were rallying at their country's call would suffer hardships or privations.

In fact, this going forth to capture the fcrt at Ticonderoga was to be a pleasure excursion rather than anything else, and Isaac Rice believed he was the most fortunate lad in the province of Massachusetts.

His outfit did not require that his mother should spend very much time upon it.

The clothes he wore comprised the only suit he owned, and when two shirts and three pairs of stockings had been made into a par-

cel of the smallest possible size, and he had borrowed his father's gun, powder horn and shot pouch, the equipment was complete.

Then came the most important of the preparations, to Isaac's mind, for he knew the corporal would criticize it closely—the store of provisions.

Had he been allowed his own bent the remainder of the Rice family might have been put on short allowance, for, with a view to pleasing the corporal, he urged that this article of food, and then that, should be put into the bag which served him as a haversack, until the larder must have been completely emptied but for his mother's emphatic refusal to follow such suggestions.

If Mrs. Rice did not shed bitter tears over Isaac when he left her to join the recruits, it was because she shared the opinion of many others in Pittsfield, and felt positive the lad

would soon return, none the worse for his short time of soldiering.

It was but natural she should take a most affectionate farewell of him, however, even though believing he would be in no especial danger, and a glimpse of the tears which his mother could not restrain caused an uncomfortable swelling in the would-be soldiers' throat.

This leaving home, even to march away by the side of Corporal 'Lige, was not as pleasant as he had supposed, and for the moment he ceased to so much as think of the provision-bag.

"Now, see here, mother," he said, with a brave attempt at indifference. "I'm not counting on doing anything more than help take the fort, and since the corporal is to be with us, that can't be a long task."

"You will ever be a good boy, Isaac?"

"Of course, mother."

"And you will write me a letter, if it so be you find the opportunity?"

This was not a pleasing prospect to the boy, for he had never found it an easy task to make a fair copy of the single line set down at the top of his writing-book; but his heart was sore for the moment, and he would have promised even more in order to check his mother's tears.

Therefore it was he agreed to make her acquainted with all his movements, so far as should be possible, and, that done, it seemed as if the sting was taken in a great measure from the parting.

Feeling more like a man than ever before in his life, Isaac set forth from his home with a heavy musket over his shoulder, and the bag of provisions hanging at his back, glancing neither to the right nor to the left

until he arrived at the corporal's dwelling.

An exclamation of surprise and delight burst from his lips when he saw the old man, armed and equipped as he had been in '58, wearing the uniform of a British soldier, even though by thus setting out he was proving his disloyalty to the king.

"Well you do look fine, corporal. I dare wager there are none who will set forth from this town as much a soldier as you!"

"I reckon Colonel Easton will come out great with his militia uniform; but what does it amount to except for the value of the gold lace that's on it? All I'm wearin' has seen service, an' though it ain't for me to say it, I shouldn't be suprised if him as is inside this 'ere red coat could tell the militia colonel much regarding his duty."

"Of course you can, corporal, every one

knows that, an' I'm expecting to see you put next in command to Colonel Allen, if it so be he goes."

"Not quite that, lad, not quite that, for there's jealousy in the ranks the same as outside of them, though I warrant many of 'em will be glad to ask Corporal 'Lige's advice before this 'ere business is over. Now let's have a look to your stores, and we'll be off."

The examination of the impromptu haversack appeared to be satisfactory to the old man, and without doing more in the way of securing his dwelling from intruders than shutting the outer door, he marched down the street with such a swagger as he evidently believed befitting a soldier.

Isaac followed meekly at his heels, troubling his head not one whit because he lacked a uniform, but believing he shared to a cer-

tain degree in Corporal 'Lige's gorgeousness and martial bearing.

The two came to a halt outside the inn, standing stiffly at "attention," and there they remained until Master Phelps was forced to go out and bid the old man enter, that the formality of signing the rolls might be gone through with, after which Isaac Rice was duly entitled to call himself a militia-man.

CHAPTER II.

A SECLUDED CAMP.

When these raw recruits departed from the town—Corporal 'Lige insisted that they did not march—they were followed for several miles by nearly all the men and boys in the vicinity.

The old man was greatly exercised because Colonel Easton, who now assumed command, allowed such an unsoldierly proceeding as that his troops should walk arm in arm with their friends, each in his own manner and at his own convenience.

Had the corporal been invested with the proper authority he would have had these raw recruits marshaled into ranks and forced

to step in unison, carrying their muskets at the same angle, and otherwise conforming themselves to his idea of soldierly bearing—all this he would have had them do; but whether he could have brought about such a condition of affairs is extremely problematical.

"I allowed Colonel James Easton came somewhere near bein' a soldier, even though he is only a militiaman," the corporal said in a tone of intense dissatisfaction to Isaac as the two marched solemnly side by side in the midst of their disorderly companions, "and I did think we could set out from here and capture Ticonderoga, if all hands were willin' to put their shoulders to the wheel; but I take back that statement, lad, and am sorry I ever was so foolish as to enlist. I ought to have known better when I saw the crowd that was signin' the rolls."

"Why, what's the matter, corporal?" and Isaac looked around in surprise, for until this moment he had believed everything was progressing in proper military fashion.

"Matter?" Corporal 'Lige cried angrily. "Look around and see how these men are comportin' themselves, an' then you'll know. Here are them as should be soldiers, seein's they've signed the rolls, mixed up with citizens till you couldn't tell one from the other unless personally acquainted with all hands. Then how are they marchin'? Why, a flock of geese couldn't straggle along in any more ungainly fashion."

"I shouldn't suppose it would make any difference how they marched so that they got there in time," Isaac ventured to suggest timidly.

"Shouldn't, eh? Then what's the good of calling themselves soldiers? Why don't

they start out like a crowd of farmers an' try their hand at taking the fort?"

"Well?" Isaac replied calmly. "Why shouldn't they? They are not soldiers, you know, corporal, and so long's the fort is taken why wouldn't it be as well if they didn't try to ape military manners?"

The old man gazed sternly at the boy while one might have counted ten, and then said in a tone of sadness:

"It's a shame, Isaac Rice, that after bein' with me all these years, an' hearin' more or less regardin' military matters, you shouldn't have more sense."

"Why, what have I said now, corporal? Is it any harm to think that farmers might take a fort?"

"Of course it is, lad. If anything of that kind could happen, what's the use of having soldiers?"

"But I suppose it is necessary to have an army if there's going to be war," Isaac replied innocently, and this last was sufficient to completely fill the vials of the old man's wrath.

That this pupil of his should fail at the very first opportunity to show a proper spirit, was to him most disappointing, and during the half-hour which followed he refused to speak, even though Isaac alternately begged his pardon for having been so ignorant and expressed regret that he had said anything which might give offense.

During all this while the citizens of Pittsfield were following the recruits in a most friendly manner, believing it their duty to thus cheer those who might soon be amid the carnage of battle, and perhaps not one realized how seriously he was by such method offending Corporal 'Lige.

Isaac's father was among this well-intentioned following, as were two of the lad's brothers, and when these representatives of the Rice family, having walked as far as the head of the household deemed necessary, were about to turn back, they ranged themselves either side of the corporal and his pupil, in order to bid the latter farewell.

"I expect you will give a good account of yourself, Isaac, when it comes to fighting, and I feel all the more confident in regard to it because you are under the wing of a man who knows what it is to be a soldier."

This compliment was intended for Corporal 'Lige as a matter of course; but he paid no other attention to it than to say:

"If the lad had profited by my teachings, he'd know that he has no right to talk with outsiders while he's in the ranks."

"That's exactly it," Mr. Rice replied,

wholly oblivious that the corporal was administering what he believed to be a most severe rebuke. "That is exactly it, my son, and you will do well to remember that you cannot fail in your duty so long as you take pattern from the corporal."

The old soldier gave vent to what can be described only as a "snort" of contempt; and the boy's sorrow was as nothing compared with what it had been when bidding good-by to his mother.

After the young Rices had turned their faces homeward in obedience to the orders of the elder Rice, Isaac gave more heed to copying the movements of the corporal, thereby atoning in a certain measure for his previous injudicious remarks.

The boy firmly believed that no more able soldier could be found in all the colonies than this same Corporal 'Lige, and had any person

ventured to remark that the expedition might be as well off without him, Isaac would have set the speaker down as one lacking common sense.

Take the corporal out of the ranks, and young Rice would have said there was no possibility either Crown Point or Ticonderoga could be captured.

Thus it was that an order from Colonel Allen, Colonel Easton, or Seth Warner was as nothing compared with one from Corporal 'Lige, in the mind of Isaac Rice; but there were many in the ranks who did not have such an exalted opinion of the old soldier, and these were free with their criticisms and unfavorable remarks, much against the raw recruit's peace of mind, as well as the corporal's annoyance.

It was because of these light-headed volunteers, who saw only in this expedition a

novel and agreeable form of junketing, out of which it was their duty to extract all the sport possible regardless of the feelings of others, that Corporal 'Lige withdrew himself, so to speak, from his comrades, and barely acknowledged the salutes of any save his superior officers.

At the end of the second day's journey he refused to go into camp with them; but applied to the captain of his company for permission to advance yet a short distance further, at which point he could join the troops when they came forward next morning. It was known by all the expedition, even including those who were making the old soldier the butt of their mirth, that he was held in high esteem by Colonel Ethan Allen, and the request, although irregular, was readily granted, after a warning against the perils attendant upon such a course.

"It is better you stay with the troops, corporal," the captain said kindly, "although I have no hesitation in saying you are free to do as you choose."

"And I do not choose to remain in the encampment for all the young geese—who fancy that by signing the rolls they have become soldiers—to sharpen their wits upon, therefore I would halt by myself, taking only the recruit I claim as my own, for company."

"I will have a care that you are not annoyed again," the officer replied in a kindly tone; but this was not to Corporal 'Lige's liking.

"If a soldier can only keep his self-respect by running to his superior officers like a schoolboy when matters are not to his fancy it is time he left the ranks. After we have smelt burning powder I fancy these young-

sters will keep a civil tongue in their heads, and until then I had best care for myself."

This was such good logic that the captain could oppose no solid argument against it, therefore the old soldier received permission for himself and "his recruit" to form camp wherever it should please him, provided, however, that they remained in the ranks while the command was advancing.

Not until after the matter had been thus settled did the captain take it upon himself to warn the corporal that it was not wholly safe to thus separate from his companions.

"It is well known that our movements are being watched by both Tories and Indians," he said in a friendly manner, such as would not offend the obstinate old soldier, "and you can well fancy that they would not hesitate to do some mischief to any of the expedition whom they might come upon alone."

"I can take care of myself, and also the boy," Corporal 'Lige replied stiffly, as he saluted his superior officer with unusual gravity, and with this the subject was dropped.

Then the old man said to his recruit, as he motioned him aside that others might not get information concerning his purpose:

"We'll draw such rations as may be served out, lad, and then push ahead to where we can be in the company of sensible people, meaning our two selves."

Isaac would have felt decidedly more safe if he could remain with the main body of troops, for he had heard the captain's caution; but he did not think it wise to give such a desire words, and by his silence signified that he was ready to do whatsoever his instructor should deem to be for the best.

The rations served these volunteers who

proposed to reduce the forts at Ticonderoga and Crown Point ere they yet knew a soldier's duties were not generous, and he who, from a desire to avoid seeming greedy, delayed in applying for them, generally found himself without food, save he might be so fortunate as to beg some from his more provident companions.

Corporal 'Lige was exceedingly friendly to his stomach; he made it a rule never to allow modesty to deprive him of a full share of whatever might be served out, therefore it was he had drawn rations for himself and Isaac almost before the troops came to a halt, and the hindermost were yet marching into camp, weary and travel-stained, when he said to his small comrade:

"There is nothing to keep us here longer, and the sooner we are at a goodly distance from these silly youngsters who fancy that

the taking of a musket in their hands makes them soldiers, the better I shall be pleased."

Isaac gave token of willingness to continue the march by shouldering his weapon once more, and the two set off, attracting no attention from their companions-in-arms, each of whom had little thought save to minister to his own comfort, for this soldiering was rapidly becoming more of a task and less of a pleasure-tour than had been at first supposed.

Not until he was fully a mile from the foremost of the main body did the corporal give any evidence of an intention to halt, and then he showed remarkably good judgment in his selection of a camping-place.

At the edge of a small brook about fifty yards from the main road over which they had been traveling, he threw down his knap-

sack, and announced in a tone of satisfaction that they would spend the night there.

"It is not too far away, and yet at such a distance that we shall not be forced to listen to the gabbling of those geese," he said as he set about building a small campfire in order to prepare the food he had procured. "Make yourself comfortable, Isaac Rice, for it is a soldier's solemn duty to gain all the rest he can."

"Do you think we shall be safe here?" the boy asked almost timidly, for it seemed little short of a crime to question any proposition made by the corporal.

"Safe, lad? What's to prevent? If you keep your ears open for stories of danger while you are with the army, you'll never know peace of mind, for there are always those faint-hearted ones ready to exaggerate the falling of a leaf into the coming of the

enemy. I have as much regard for my own safety as for yours, and I say that here we can camp in peace and safety."

This was sufficient for the corporal's recruit, and he set about making himself comfortable, with the conviction that none knew better than his comrade the general condition of affairs.

CHAPTER III.

AN UNPLEASANT SURPRISE.

SURELY this camping by themselves was exceedingly pleasant, Isaac thought, as the old soldier took upon himself the duties of cook, leaving his recruit with nothing to do save watch him as he worked.

On the previous night they had slept in the midst of a noisy throng who chattered and made merry until an exceedingly late hour, thus preventing the more weary from sleeping, and everywhere in the air, hanging like clouds, was the dust raised by the feet of so many men.

Now these two were in the seclusion of the woods, with a carpet of grass for a bed; the

rippling brook to lull them to slumber, and nothing more noisy than the insect life everywhere around to disturb their slumbers.

Corporal 'Lige was in a rare good humor. He prepared an appetizing meal, although his materials were none of the best, and when it had been eaten, seated himself by Isaac's side with pipe in his mouth, ready and willing to spin yarns of his previous experience as a soldier.

The boy was an eager listener; but after a certain time even the tones of the old soldier's voice were not sufficient to banish the sleep elves, and his eyes closed in unconsciousness just when his comrade had arrived at the most exciting portion of his narrative.

"Perhaps I shan't be so willin' the next time you want to hear what I've seen in this world," Corporal 'Lige said testily when he observed that his audience was asleep, and

then, knocking the ashes carefully from his pipe, he lay down by the side of his small companion.

It seemed to Isaac that he had hardly more than closed his eyes in unconsciousness when he was aroused by the pressure of some heavy substance upon his hand, and looking up quickly he saw, in the dim light, three men standing over the corporal.

The foot of one of these strangers was upon the boy's hand, as if he did not think Isaac of sufficient importance either to warrant his taking him prisoner, or to so much as step aside that he might be spared pain.

Before hearing a single word, Isaac understood that these late-comers were no friends of the corporal's, and he endured the pain in silence, hoping that by so doing he might escape observation.

It was hardly probable the strangers failed

to see him, for he had been lying within a few feet of his companion; but that he was not the object of their regard could be readily understood.

The man who had thus pinned the boy to the earth by his heel wore moccasins rather than boots, otherwise Isaac would have received severe injury, and as it was, the corporal's recruit suffered considerable pain before the foot was finally removed; but yet made no sound.

So far as he could judge by the conversation, these strangers must have been in camp some time before he was awakened, for when he first opened his eyes they were in the midst of an unpleasant conversation with the old soldier, such as had evidently been carried on for some moments.

"If he don't choose to tell, string him up to a tree," one of the party cried impatiently

at the moment Isaac first became conscious that matters were not running smoothly in this private encampment. "A dead rebel is of more good than a live one, and we have no time to lose."

"Hang me, if that's what you're hankerin' for!" Corporal 'Lige cried in a voice that sounded thick and choked as if a heavy pressure was upon his throat. "Even though I knew more concernin' this 'ere expedition than I do, not a word should I speak."

"We'll soon see whether you're so willing to dance on nothing," the first speaker cried vindictively, and then came noises as if the man was making ready to carry his threat into execution.

"Give him another chance," one of the Tories suggested. "Let the old fool tell us all he knows of Allen's plans, an' we'll leave him none the worse for our coming."

"I know nothing!" the corporal cried in a rage. "Do you reckon the colonel would lay out his campaign before me?"

"It is said he did so before you left Pittsfield."

"Whoever says that is a liar; but even though he had made the fullest explanations, I would not reveal the plans to you. You must think I'm a mighty poor kind of a soldier if I don't know how to die rather than play the traitor."

"You'll soon have a chance of proving what you can do!" the third man cried angrily, and then it was he stepped forward, leaving Isaac free to do as he thought best.

That these three Tories were bent on hanging the old soldier, or at least so nearly doing so as to frighten him into disclosing all he knew regarding Colonel Allen's plans, there could be no question, and young Rice,

trembling with fear though he was, had no other thought than as to how it might be possible for him to aid his comrade.

It did not seem probable the men were ignorant regarding the boy's presence, and the only explanation which can be made as to why they failed to secure him is that he was so nearly a child as to appear of but little consequence. They evidently had no thought that he could in any way thwart their purpose, and, therefore, no heed was given to him.

It can readily be imagined that Isaac did not waste much time in speculations as to why he was allowed to remain at liberty.

Now was come the moment when he might repay some portion of the debt he believed he owed Corporal 'Lige, and the only anxiety in his mind was lest he should not do it in proper military fashion.

He could not even so much as guess what a genuine soldier would do under the same circumstances; but he had a very good idea as to how a boy might extricate himself from such a difficulty, and lost no time in beginning the work.

The three men were so busily engaged trying to frighten the corporal into telling them what he might know of Colonel Allen's forces as not to heed the noise Isaac made when he rolled himself toward the bushes in that direction where the two muskets had been set up against a tree under the foliage in such manner that they might not be affected by the dew.

It was impossible for him to say exactly what these intruders were doing to Corporal 'Lige, but, from the noises, he judged they had first made a prisoner of the old man by seizing him around the throat, perhaps while

he was yet asleep, and now there was every indication that they were making ready to carry out the threat of hanging.

"Give him another chance to tell what he knows," one of the men cried, and immediately afterward the old soldier replied:

"String me up if you will, for there's no need of waiting any longer with the idea that I'm goin' to give you any information, even if I have it."

"Then up with him!" the man who had first spoken shouted, and Isaac, without looking in that direction, heard the confused noises which told him the enemy were trying to raise the old man to his feet.

By this time the boy had his hand on one of the muskets, and his first impulse was to discharge it full at the intruders; but before he could act, the thought came that there were two shots at his disposal, and he ought

to so plan as to make both of them count. He believed it was necessary to work with the utmost speed, lest these three Tories should have hung the corporal before he was ready to interfere, and yet a certain number of seconds were absolutely necessary before he could carry out that plan which had suddenly come into his mind.

With both muskets under his arm he crept cautiously a few paces onward until screened by the foliage, and then raising one of the weapons, took deliberate aim at the nearest enemy.

There was no thought in his mind that he was thus compassing the death of a human being. He only knew his comrade's life was in danger, and that a well-directed shot might save him.

The three men had by this time gotten a rope around Corporal 'Lige's neck, and, find-

ing that it was difficult to raise the old man to his feet, were throwing the halter over the limb of the nearest tree as a method of saving labor.

One of the Tories, he who appeared to be the elder, and who was directing the movements of the others, stood a few paces from his comrades, and, taking deliberate aim at him, Isaac shouted:

"Throw down your weapons, and surrender, or you are dead men!"

The words had but just been spoken when he discharged the musket, and a scream of pain from the living target told that the bullet had sped true to its mark.

The two men who were as yet unarmed dropped the rope they were holding and sprang toward their weapons, which had been left on the ground near by; but before they could reach them, Isaac had emptied a

second musket, and another cry of pain rang out.

"Throw down your weapons and surrender, or you are dead men!" he shouted again, and at this the third Tory, who must have believed there was more than one man in the thicket, took to his heels in alarm, while Corporal 'Lige, who had received no worse injury than a severe choking, seized upon the three muskets which were lying close beside him.

Even now, when two of the intruders were wounded and the third running for dear life, Isaac was doubtful as to whether he should show himself.

He remained in concealment, while the corporal gazed around him in surprise for a dozen seconds or more, and gave no token of his whereabouts until the old man shouted:

"Hello, friends! Show yourselves!"

"IS IT ALL RIGHT, CORPORAL?" ISAAC ASKED TIMIDLY.
Corporal 'Lige's Recruit, p. 57.

"Is it all right?" Isaac asked timidly, and in a tone which was little better than a squeak. "Is it all right, corporal?"

"Come in here, Isaac Rice. Can it be it was you who fired those shots?"

The raw recruit came forward almost timidly, and Corporal 'Lige, shifting the three muskets he had taken possession of over on to his left arm, seized the boy by the hand.

"I've done a good bit of soldierin' in my day, lad; seen surprises, an' ambushes, an' attacks of a similar kind without number; but never did I know of anything that was done with more neatness an' dispatch than this same job of yours, which has saved my neck from bein' stretched. I'm proud of you, lad!"

Isaac was overwhelmed by this praise, yet not to such an extent but that there was a

great fear in his mind lest he had taken a human life, and he asked anxiously:

"Do you suppose I hurt either of them seriously, Corporal 'Lige?" and he pointed to where the wounded men lay.

"It is to be hoped you killed 'em both, so that we may be spared any further trouble with the vermin," and not until then did the corporal condescend to give any attention to those enemies who had been so sadly worsted by a boy.

Just at this moment the wounded Tories suffered more in mind than in body, for they now understood who had made the attack upon them, and it can readily be fancied that both were ashamed at having been thus defeated in their purpose by one whom they had considered of so little importance that no effort was made to deprive him of his liberty when they surprised the encampment.

It was with the most intense relief that young Rice heard the corporal's report, which was to the effect that he who had acted as leader of the party had a severe but apparently not exceedingly dangerous wound in the shoulder, while his comrade was suffering from a bullet-hole in the leg.

"They're disabled, lad, but not killed, an' the first bit of soldierin' that you have been called on to do is like to give great credit with such as Colonel Allen and Colonel Easton. Tell me how you happened to think of overcoming them in this shape?"

"I didn't think of it," the boy replied. "It seemed to me you were like to be hanged and I only did what was in my power."

"I came nigher to havin' my neck stretched than ever before, an' as it was, the villainous Tories pulled mighty hard on that rope, before you effected the rescue; but, lad, you

must have thought! This attack you made in such a soldierly fashion wasn't the result of chance, an' that I'll go bail."

It was useless to make any attempt at convincing Corporal 'Lige of what was only the truth.

The old man was so determined to look upon the rescue as a soldierly act that he would not accept any other explanation, and the boy ceased his fruitless efforts by asking:

"What is to be done with these two Tories?"

"I reckon they must be got back to camp, although it would be no more than servin' 'em right if we put an end to their miserable lives without further parley."

"Oh, you wouldn't kill them in cold blood, Corporal 'Lige?" Isaac cried in alarm.

"No; I don't reckon I would, though that's what ought to be done with 'em. It's plain

you an' I can't lug the two a matter of a mile or more, so one must stand guard over 'em while the other goes back to the camp. I'm leavin' it to you to say which service you'll perform, for after this night's work I'm willin' to admit that my recruit has in him the makin's of a better soldier than I can ever hope to be."

The boy gave no heed to this praise at the time, although later he remembered the words with pleasure.

Now there was in his mind a fear lest the corporal should desire him to guard the prisoners, and, the more imminent danger over, he was growing exceedingly timorous.

"I'll go back to the encampment if it so please you, Corporal 'Lige, because I can run faster than you."

"As you will, lad, as you will. Explain to Colonel Ethan Allen what has happened here

and let him say how these venomous snakes are to be treated."

During this conversation neither of the wounded men had spoken; but now, as the boy was about to set out for the encampment, he who had evidently acted as the leader cried sharply:

"Hold on a bit! What is the sense of sending us into your camp when we are like to die? Why not give us a show for our lives?"

"In what way?" Corporal 'Lige asked sternly.

"By allowing us to go to our homes."

"That will do," the old soldier said angrily. "After your attempt to kill me I'm not such a simple as to let you go scot free. Get you gone, lad, and make the report to Colonel Allen as soon as may be."

The wounded Tory continued to plead with

the corporal; but Isaac did not wait to hear anything more.

He set out at full speed down the road in the direction where the troops were encamped, running at his best pace, and fearing each instant lest that Tory who had made his escape should suddenly come upon him.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LETTER.

WHEN Isaac was come within hailing distance of the few sentinels who had been posted to guard against a surprise, he was astonished at being halted after having announced who he was, and the laxness of military discipline can be understood when it is said that, after being recognized by the recruit at that particular post, the boy was allowed to enter the encampment without further question.

Colonel Allen was not better lodged than his men. A lean-to formed of a few boughs was the only shelter he had, and Isaac was forced to search among the sleeping soldiers

several moments before discovering the whereabouts of the commander.

Once this had been done it was but the work of a few seconds to acquaint the officer with what had occurred, and at this evidence that the Tories were dogging the little army, more than one recruit who had boasted the loudest as to what he would do when the time for fighting should come, turned suspiciously pale as he approached to hear all Isaac was saying.

"Why did Corporal Watkins camp by himself?" Colonel Allen asked when the boy concluded his report.

"Because some of the men poke fun at him, allowin' that he's too old to be of service, an' far too crochety to make any fist at bein' a soldier," Isaac replied promptly.

"I wish from the bottom of my heart that I had one hundred men like him, rather than

some of the braggarts who do not know there is such a work as the manual of arms," the colonel said in a loud voice, as if desirous that all should hear. "Tell the corporal that he will camp with this force in the future, and I shall make it my especial business to learn who it is that dares make matters uncomfortable for him."

Then, to the captain of the company to which Corporal 'Lige was attached, an order was given that a squad of men be sent forward to bring in the prisoners, and when this had been obeyed the old soldier, as a matter of course, returned with them.

From that night Isaac heard nothing more regarding the wounded Tories. It was said they had been sent back to Pittsfield under a strong guard, and certain it is they disappeared from the encampment before daybreak, but neither the boy nor the corporal

could find a single man who had seen them depart.

This incident, and it was hardly to be spoken of as anything of importance, together with Colonel Allen's remark, served to render Corporal 'Lige's life more pleasant, for those who had used him as the butt of their mirth began to understand that he was superior to themselves, in a soldierly way, and more than one sought his advice on various occasions.

At sunset on the seventh day of May the raw recruits had arrived at Castleton, fourteen miles east of Skenesborough, and Isaac himself has given the details of that straggling march through the country, in the first letter written to his mother after setting out as a soldier:

"MAY THE EIGHTH, 1775.

"MY DEAR MOTHER, FATHER, AND CHILDREN:

"We have been camping here in this

thicket since last night, and if there is anybody in all the company more tired of soldiering than I am, I would like to meet him. I wore a hole in the heel of my stocking on the second day, and got such a blister because of it that I've been obliged to go barefoot ever since.

"We have had plenty to eat, for the folks along the road were most kind; but it's sleeping that has been the worst on me, though the corporal says I never can hope to be a soldier till I'm able to lay down in three or four inches of water and get as much rest as I would at home in bed. I tell him I don't hope to be one any more, for I've had about enough of it, though of course I shall stick by the company till we've taken the fort, and it's pretty certain we shall do that, because now there are two hundred and seventy men in the ranks.

"Colonel Easton enlisted thirty-nine of his militia before we got to Bennington, and

there we were joined by the Green Mountain Boys under the command of Colonel Ethan Allen.

"It surprised me to find that a good many of the people don't believe we are doing right in trying to take away the fort from the king's troops, and the corporal says that unless this thing is a success we are all like to be hanged for traitors, because his majesty will make an example of them who are foremost in the work—which means us.

"Two hours after we halted last night Colonel Benedict Arnold, who is said to have gone from New Haven as captain of a company, to Cambridge, arrived here with a few men and a large amount—so it seems to me—of military supplies.

"Although knowing that Colonel Allen is in charge of this force, he claimed the right to take command, and, so the corporal says, made display of a commission signed by the Massachusetts Committee of Safety, declar-

ing that it entitled him to take charge of all the troops. Now, although I'm not a soldier —the corporal says I never will be—I've got sense enough to understand that if I enlisted under Colonel Easton, and was willing he should give way to Colonel Allen so we might have the Green Mountain Boys with us, the Massachusetts Committee of Safety have got nothing to do with saying who shall lead in the battle—though I hope to goodness we shan't see one.

"The corporal says that no committee is going to scare Ethan Allen, and it's certain, so those of the Green Mountain Boys with whom I've talked say, that this stranger won't get himself into command of the company, even though, as is said, he brings one hundred pounds in money, two hundred pounds' weight of gunpowder, the same of leaden balls, and one thousand flints, to carry all of which, and himself, he has ten horses.

"Now, the corporal claims that these things, including the money, are munitions of war, and that if Colonel Arnold doesn't deliver them over to Colonel Allen, they will be taken from him, and he, Corporal 'Lige, I mean, went early this morning to Master Phelps, offering to see to it that this property was delivered up to us; but for some reason or other—neither the corporal nor I can understand what—his offer was not accepted.

"I have heard it said, and the corporal is of the opinion it is true, that when the council of war was held last night before this gentleman from New Haven arrived, Colonel Allen was chosen commander of the whole expedition, Colonel Easton second in command, and Seth Warner third. It was decided that the greater number of us, with the principal officers, would march from here to Shoreham —which you know is opposite Ticonderoga— and Captain Herrick with thirty men would at the same time go to Skenesborough to

capture young Major Skene, whose father, the governor, is now in England; seize all the boats they can find, and join us at Shoreham. Captain Douglas is to go to Panton with a small troop, and get whatever craft is in the water roundabout. The corporal says he shall be quite well satisfied with this arrangement, providing the remainder of the plan is mapped out as he thinks right.

"However, nobody seems to know whether Colonel Arnold will manage to get his commission from the Massachusetts Committee of Safety recognized as good and sufficient authority for him to lord it over our people, and we ask each other what will become of his munitions of war in case he doesn't, or how may the plans be changed if he does?

"What I can't understand in this whole business is why the corporal shouldn't be the third officer in command, instead of Master Warner, who I have no doubt is a very worthy gentleman; but of course can-

not claim to be any such soldier as Corporal 'Lige. He says there's always a lot of jealousy among officers in the army, and that's why he isn't to be given a chance to show how much he can do.

"The food I brought from home was used up the second day—the corporal had what he called a 'coming appetite'—and perhaps it was just as well, for I had all the load any fellow could want to carry. I never believed before leaving home that father's musket was so heavy; I held it over my shoulder until it seemed as if the flesh was worn right down to the bone; then lugged it in my hand till my arm ached as if it was going to drop off, and I verily believe I would have thrown the thing away but that Corporal 'Lige said a soldier didn't amount to very much unless he had a weapon of some kind.

"The corporal says I am to give you his dutiful compliments, and to say that if his

life is spared, by the blessing of God, he will capture Ticonderoga before we come back.

"As for me, I wish I was at home now, though it will be a fine thing if we do what the old man says is our duty in these times, without being hanged.

"I haven't yet found out why people think there is so much honor to be gained in being a soldier. To my mind it's much like any other way of running around the country; but the corporal says if he had the management of affairs things would be different, because he'd keep the men right up to their work, though I don't see how it could well be done. For my part, I shouldn't carry a musket over my shoulder when I was lame and tired just because any man said so. It would be as well whatever fashion I lugged it, providing the labor was lessened; but the corporal says it would make all the difference in the world if we marched the same as we would at a muster.

"I love you all very much, and shall be precious glad to find myself at home again.

"From your obedient and dutiful son,

"ISAAC RICE."

In this letter the young recruit, who although having enjoyed the teachings of Corporal 'Lige, was certainly not a soldier at heart, has told the main facts in the case regarding the halt of the militia at Castleton; but it will be observed that his modesty was too great to permit of his mentioning the brave part he played in the rescue of Corporal 'Lige from the Tories.

He has failed, however, most probably through ignorance, in giving Colonel Arnold's authority for claiming his right to lead the expedition.

That officer had brought to Cambridge from New Haven a company of which he was

the captain, and upon arriving there at once reported to the Massachusetts Committee of Safety that it would be possible, before the forts had been reinforced, to seize the works at Ticonderoga and Crown Point with a comparatively small body of men.

He proceeded to organize an expedition for such a purpose, and to this end was supplied with the money and munitions of war mentioned by Isaac, together with a colonel's commission, which gave him the chief command of troops, not exceeding four hundred in number, which he might raise to accompany him against the lake fortresses.

Upon arriving at Stockbridge, in the province of Massachusetts, he learned that another expedition had set out—that is to say the same one Corporal 'Lige and Isaac accompanied—and after engaging officers and men to the number of fourteen he has-

tened onward, overtaking the militia as Isaac has said.

In this camp where military discipline was conspicuous by its absence, the recruits, who had learned within the hour what had been decided upon the night previous by the council of war, soon ascertained the position which the officer from New Haven claimed, and knew exactly what he proposed to do by virtue of his commission.

Even though the men had not learned such facts from their officers, those recruits who accompanied Colonel Arnold would have at once made the matter public.

At about the time Isaac finished the letter to his mother the encampment was in a state bordering on insubordination.

Colonel Arnold's recruits raised in Stockbridge insisted that their leader should command the forces, not only because he was

authorized to do so, but owing to the fact that he had the money and ammunition necessary to carry out the plan, while the members of Colonel Allen's regiment, known as the Green Mountain Boys were equally determined that such honor as might be gained should be their colonel's, and in a brief space of time these new-fledged patriots were ripe for riot.

Now was come the hour when Corporal 'Lige had shown him some portion of that consideration which he believed due his experience in military affairs.

Those members of Colonel Easton's militia regiment which had joined the expedition, jealous because their leader had given way to Colonel Allen, now demanded loudly and publicly that he must lead the party or they would turn back.

Inasmuch, however, as this portion of the

troops amounted to fifty or thereabouts, they had a small showing when the Green Mountain boys, who were more than two hundred strong, came forth in turn with their threats.

Colonel Allen was to be retained first in command, as had been decided upon the previous evening, or they should march back to Bennington without an hour's delay.

On the other hand, the men from Stockbridge insisted that Colonel Arnold was the lawful commander because he was the only one who held a commission for such purpose, and threatened that neither money nor munitions of war should be given up unless his claims were fully recognized.

On this morning of the eighth of May the men were divided into three divisions according to their opinions, and it seemed much as if the officers were willing they should settle it without interference, for

those highest in command remained in council among themselves, giving no heed to the threats which were uttered here and there until it seemed positive personal encounters must soon take the place of words.

The men from round about Pittsfield, recognizing the need of a leader in what might properly be termed a mutiny, selected Corporal 'Lige as if by common consent, and Isaac had but just written his mother's name on the missive which had cost him so much labor, when he and the corporal were surrounded by the faction to which belonged their neighbors and friends.

One of these, a butcher, whose home was in Pittsfield, thus addressed the old man, using at the beginning of his remark just that compliment best calculated to please him.

"You, who have had so much experience

in military affairs, Corporal 'Lige, should be able to settle this matter without any great loss of time, for according to my way of thinking it must be arranged among the men themselves, or not at all."

"I have seen plenty of fightin', the corporal began slowly, as if undecided what words had best be used; "but it was in the king's army, as you well know, and there every one in command held their commission from his majesty, which plainly said he was to be the leader. Now it seems in this 'ere case that the only officer who has any real authority is the one from New Haven——"

A chorus of derisive howls interrupted the old man, and not a few of his neighbors accused him of being a traitor because he was apparently on the point of giving his decision in favor of the stranger.

Waiting patiently until they had exhausted

their anger, and were silent once more, he continued placidly:

"As I said before it seems to me the only one with any show of authority is the officer from New Haven; but," and Corporal 'Lige emphasized this word, "but what do you know of this 'ere Massachusetts Committee of Safety? Accordin' to my way of figurin', that body of men are lookin' out for matters round about Boston, and we've got with us recruits all the way from Pittsfield up to Bennington, none of whom are given overmuch to heedin' what the Boston folks think is right or wrong. Therefore I say, that while the officer from New Haven seems to have the only real authority, it strikes me that his commission does not extend as far as this 'ere spot, where we are encamped."

Again he was interrupted; but this time by cries expressive of satisfaction and good will.

"We were the ones who started the idea of taking the fort," a recruit from Pittsfield cried, "and that being the case I hold we've got the right to say who shall lead us."

"But the Green Mountain Boys won't go except their colonel is in command," another added, and a third cried:

"The men of Stockbridge will hold to Colonel Arnold, and won't go on under another."

"Well, I've heard all that before," Corporal 'Lige said in a tone of fine irony. "If you have come to me to repeat the same story that has been goin' 'round the encampment since daybreak, why then you are wastin' your time. If you want my opinion so that this thing can be put right in short order, hold your tongues, an' I'll give it."

"Let Corporal 'Lige finish."

"He is soldier enough to know what should be done."

"Go on, corporal, go on."

This evidence of popularity was most pleasing to the old man, and smiling benignantly upon those nearest, he said, with the air of one who cannot be in the wrong:

"This is how it must be done: Let them as come with Colonel Easton, stick to him; the Green Mountain Boys shall hang to the tail of Colonel Allen's coat, and the Stockbridge men may follow Colonel Arnold. That makes three bands of us. Now, mark you, lads, there are three sides to that 'ere fort—one apiece. Let us meet here at whatever hour you will, and then start on the minute, each troop taking a different course, an' them who arrive first an' capture the fortification, gets the credit."

"But we are needing what Colonel Arnold brought with him," some one cried.

"Ay, and you would have heard me fix that

if you'd waited. Where did this 'ere Massachusetts Committee of Safety get these munitions of war an' this money? Why, they got it out of the province, of course. And where did we come from? Why, we come from the province of Massachusetts, of course. Then who does this money and these munitions of war belong to? Why, they belong to us, of course. Now, as near as I have heard, there are only fourteen following Colonel Arnold. How long will it take us to lay our hands on all that stuff? Then I guarantee that Colonel Easton—for if he wants me to do it I'll help him in conducting the campaign—will march straight through an' take Ticonderoga before you've had time to say Jack Robinson. Never mind what the Green-Mountain Boys do, an' as for the Stockbridge men, they ain't enough for the countin'."

The advice which Corporal 'Lige had given met with the unqualified approval of all whom he addressed, and instantly shouts were raised in his honor until those recruits who were not in the secret looked about them in alarm and dismay as if fearing an attack.

Isaac was frightened, of that there could be no mistake.

It seemed to him as if an immediate and unquestionably dangerous encounter could not be prevented, for already were the men hanging about Corporal 'Lige in a dense body as bees hang about their queen when swarming, all urging that he lead them on to wrest from the Stockbridge men the property which he had proven did not belong to them.

Isaac glanced this way and then as if trying to determine in which direction it would

be safest to flee, but at this moment his eyes fell upon a lad of about his own age, who had come in from the highway and was staring about him in perplexity.

CHAPTER V.

NATHAN BEMAN.

In his fear and trouble it seemed to Isaac as if this stranger might render him some valuable assistance.

It was as if he stood alone amid the recruits, now that Corporal 'Lige had been claimed, so to speak, as leader of the Pittsfield faction, and the lad needed some one to whom he could appeal for advice.

Therefore it was that while the new-comer was staring about him as if distracted by the tumult, Isaac approached in the most friendly manner as he asked:

"Are you a recruit?"

"What do you mean by that?"

"Do you belong to the soldiers here?"

"Do you call these soldiers?" the stranger asked almost contemptuously.

"Well, if they ain't, what do you call them?"

"They look to me like a crowd of folks what was goin' to have a fight pretty soon."

"That's jest what I'm afraid of. Say, do you live near here?"

"No, I came from Shoreham. We heard there was a crowd comin' to take Fort Ticonderoga, an' seein's how they didn't get along very fast, I thought I'd come an' hunt 'em up. Do you count yourself a soldier?"

"I did when I left Pittsfield; but I've kind'er got over that feelin' now. What's your name?"

"Nathan Beman."

"Mine's Isaac Rice."

"What made you come out with a crowd like this?"

"All the folks 'round our way was enlisting, and they said it was the duty of everybody to fight against the king. Besides that the corporal was going, an' he agreed to put me through in great shape."

"Who's the corporal?"

"That's him over there with the red coat on."

"Do you allow an old chap like him could put anybody through in very great shape?"

"You mustn't talk like that about Corporal 'Lige where anybody will hear you. Why, he's a regular soldier; fought under General Abercrombie in '58, an' I reckon if it hadn't been for him the king's troops would have got it terrible bad."

"An' that's about the way they did get it."

"Well, Corporal 'Lige is here now, an' it'll be different. Did you ever see the fort?"

"See it? Why, I'm over there pretty near

very week. Our folks sell eggs an' chickens an' such truck to the garrison, an' I know the place jest like I do my own home."

"Do you s'pose we can take it?"

"There seems to be a sight of you here; but I shouldn't want to make a guess till after I'd seen whether there's going to be a row among all hands or not. Father says when thieves fall out honest men get their due."

However frightened Isaac might be, he was not disposed to allow any boy of his own size to call the members of this army thieves, even though they were in a state of insubordination, and forgetting all his fears he demanded sternly:

"Who are you calling thieves?"

"Now, you needn't get so huffy, 'cause I didn't mean anything," Nathan replied quietly, and yet with no show of alarm;

"but father is always sayin' that, an' I s'pose it means—well I don't know what, except that all hands of you are fightin' here, an' it looks like as if Captain Delaplace would get the best of it."

"Who's he?"

"The commandant of the fort, of course."

"Well, see here, Nathan, it begins to look as though there was goin' to be a row for a fact, and I hoped you lived close by so I could go to your house till it was over."

"But you're a soldier, ain't you?"

"Not much of one."

"Well, if you've enlisted, a fight is right where you belong," and Nathan appeared to think this settled the matter beyond any argument.

"I ain't so certain of that; but even if I do belong in a fight I shan't stay in one. It seems like as if Corporal 'Lige had turned

me off, an' all he's thinking about is helping our crowd get the best of the Stockbridgers."

"Well, there ain't anything very dangerous here yet awhile; suppose we wait an' see how things turn? I don't care overmuch for fightin' myself; but that's no reason why I shouldn't want to know whether there's likely to be a row or not."

Isaac admired the courage of his new acquaintance and immediately adopted him as a protector, taking up his position a pace or two in the rear of Nathan as he watched the threatening movements.

The recruits from Pittsfield and vicinity were standing in close order with the corporal at their head, evidently ready for whatever turn might come in affairs.

Some of them retained their weapons; but the majority appeared to have more confidence in their fists, and with arms bared to

the elbow were awaiting the word which would precipitate them upon the small body from Stockbridge who guarded the treasure.

This last detachment had either learned of the advice given by Corporal 'Lige, or scented danger because they were so few in numbers as compared with the other two factions, and were standing shoulder to shoulder ready to resist an expected attack.

A short distance away the Green-Mountain Boys remained strictly by themselves; but not giving any sign of taking part in the lawless proceedings. So long as Ethan Allen was considered the head of the expedition they were satisfied to stand aloof from any brawl.

As has been said before, the leading officers were nowhere to be seen; some of the better informed declared they were in the shelter near by which had been used as

their quarters during the night, and with Colonel Arnold were discussing the question of superiority in rank.

Corporal 'Lige hesitated to give the word which should precipitate the riot.

He had been elevated to the position of leader and perhaps the responsibility weighed heavily upon him, for certain it is that after advising what should be done, he evinced a disposition to retire from what might be the scene of a conflict.

"Look here, old man, we're ready to do as you have said. Now give the word and lead us on to those recruits. We'll soon find out what they're made of," one of the men said as the corporal turned toward the rear much as though intending to join Isaac and Nathan:

"Yes, give the word. This is your plan, and we're ready to carry it out as you have said!"

"Fair an' easy; fair an' easy, comrades," Corporal 'Lige said soothingly. "A good general doesn't depend wholly on his plan until he's made certain of the enemy's position. You don't allow that we can rush in hilter-skilter an' hope to work our purpose, eh?"

"Why not? There are only a dozen of them to near fifty of us."

"But look at Colonel Allen's regiment."

"Well, what of them? They are not in this quarrel, for their commander is leader of the expedition so far."

"No, they are not in it," the corporal said; "but what assurance have we they won't take a hand as soon as we begin operations? Don't you allow they know what the Stockbridge men brought with them?"

"Why, everybody in camp knows that."

"Then do you suppose they're goin' to

stand by idly while we take the money and munitions?"

The men began to murmur among themselves, and Corporal 'Lige appeared well satisfied that they should thus consume the time; but before many minutes had passed one and another spoke derisively of the old man, asking what his plan was good for if he didn't dare carry it out, or why he had not made mention of what Colonel Allen's men might do in event of his suggestion being acted upon?

At first the corporal was not minded to take heed of these disparaging remarks; but as the clamor increased he was forced to defend himself, and made answer sharply:

"The plan was good, and the only one likely to succeed. When I got that far with it you jumped to the idea that it should be worked out at once. Now all the while I

was keeping my eye fixed on Colonel Allen's men, tryin' to make up my mind what they'd do when we struck the first blow, and I haven't decided yet."

"You're a coward! You claimed to be an old soldier, and to know more of warfare than any one in this encampment, not excepting the commanders, but yet you don't dare lead fifty men against a dozen!"

"If I don't dare it isn't because I'm afraid of bodily injury; but I can't afford to stake my reputation as a soldier where the chances are likely to be so heavy against us. It's one thing to have a good plan, an' just as important to know when to carry it out. If we hang together an' are ready to take advantage of the first opportunity that comes, then we'll be showing our strength; but not by rushing in hilter-skilter like a crowd of boys primed for a rough-an'-tumble fight."

Corporal 'Lige's argument was evidently considered a good one, for at once the outcries which had been raised against him died away, the men yet remaining in position as if ready to act upon any suggestion he might make.

"I don't reckon there's goin' to be much trouble 'round here after all," Nathan said in a tone of disappointment, and Isaac gave vent to a sigh of relief. "It strikes me that old man crawled out of a pretty small hole."

"Do you mean to say he wouldn't dare do what the men wanted?"

"Well, he would be a pretty poor stick if he didn't. There's four of this crowd to one of that. What I allow is he's afraid of the officers, and if this is any kind of a military company he's got good cause to be, accordin' to the way things run up to the fort. There you wouldn't hear privates tellin' who

should command 'em, an' who shouldn't, else they'd find themselves in trouble."

At this moment a great shout went up from the Green-Mountain Boys, and as the two factions who had stood facing each other ready for the encounter glanced around quickly, they saw Colonel Ethan Allen approaching.

Then the Stockbridge men set up a shout, for Colonel Arnold stepped to Allen's side as if of equal rank, and the Pittsfield detachment remained silent, because Colonel Easton was walking in the rear of these two officers.

"It looks as if our colonel had given in, an' wasn't countin' on standin' up for his own rights," Corporal 'Lige said mournfully. "Let one of you run over there an' tell him what we're ready to do. Say we'll begin the scrimmage as soon as he gives the word."

This order was obeyed, and the little troop watched the messenger as he approached the colonel, and, without so much as touching his cap by way of salute, spoke earnestly during a few seconds.

Then Colonel Easton was seen to shake his head decidedly, and the man returned to his fellows looking thoroughly ashamed.

"What's the matter?" Corporal 'Lige asked sharply.

"He says if we had any idea of our duties as soldiers we should be less ready to advise and more eager to obey."

"There's a good deal of sense in that," the corporal said thoughtfully; "but at the same time I claim matters are in such shape that we're justified in making the proposition. When a body of men have got a commander what won't stand up for himself, it's time the rank and file took the matter in hand."

"Is that what you call good soldiering?" Nathan Beman asked shrilly, and Isaac clutched his new friend by the arm frantically for it alarmed him that any one should dare ask such a bold question of the corporal.

The old man turned around angrily; opened his mouth as if to speak, and then, repenting of his purpose, faced the on-coming officers once more, much as if to say that such a question from such a questioner was not worthy of regard.

The group of officers advanced until they were standing at equal distances from each of the three factions, and Colonel Allen said, speaking slowly and distinctly, looking at the forces from Stockbridge and Pittsfield:

"It is no secret that you men are disgruntled because I have been chosen commander of the expedition. You are enlisted as militia from the province of Massa-

chusetts and as enroled men have no voice in choosing a commander. Therefore I propose to make no explanation of the matter; but have taken this opportunity to address you in order to say that, by the advice and with the consent of the others in command, those of you who cannot obey such orders as may be given regardless of who is the leader, had best return home from this point. It shall not be counted against you as deserters, for the names of those who are unwilling to serve cheerfully will be stricken quietly from the rolls, without any mention whatever, dishonorable or otherwise. Colonel Arnold presents himself with due authority from the province of Massachusetts to take command of any troops not exceeding four hundred which may be raised for the purpose of attacking Fort Ticonderoga. Under all the circumstances he has

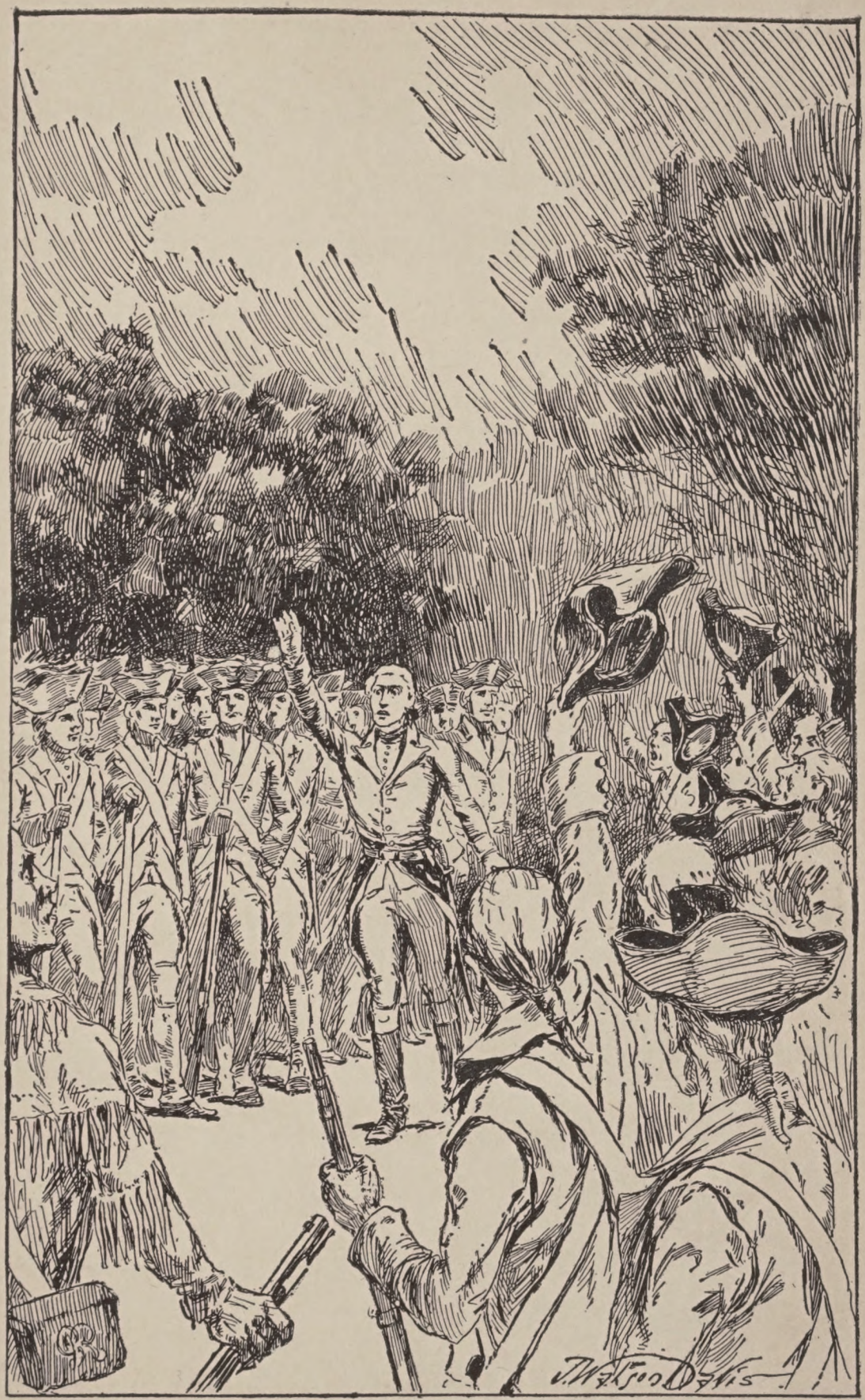
decided to wave his claim of rank and act as volunteer until the purpose for which we have advanced be accomplished. Now, then, those of you who cannot obey my orders, step to the right."

The Green-Mountain Boys began to raise shouts of approval, but their colonel checked them by saying sternly:

"Silence in the ranks! Let no man dare give voice to his approval or disapproval of what may occur in this encampment!"

It was as if Colonel Easton believed some of his men might take advantage of the opportunity, and stepping quickly to the side of Allen, he said:

"Lads, when the question came up last night as to who should lead this expedition, I cast the first vote for Colonel Allen. He is a soldier of much experience and great ability. It is my earnest desire that he take



"SILENCE IN THE RANKS!" THE COLONEL SAID STERNLY.
Corporal 'Lige's Recruit, p. 104.

upon himself the responsibility of directing our movements, and whatsoever he orders shall be performed by me faithfully and promptly."

Colonel Arnold made no attempt to address his men, and the three officers stood in silence several moments, after which Allen said:

"Because none of you have signified your desire to be relieved from the enlistment, we will suppose all are willing to go forward, and from now out there can be no excuse for insubordination or hesitation."

This said, the officers withdrew once more, and now that their colonel was no longer there to check them the Green Mountain Boys set up a shout of triumph, which was answered by derisive yells from Corporal 'Lige's troop, and apparent indifference by the men from Stockbridge.

"I reckon I may as well go home now," Nathan said in a low tone to Isaac. "There don't seem to be any chance of a row because the men are going to give in easy enough; but I'd like to see 'em find their way into the fort. It ain't so easy as they're countin' on."

"Who is this boy, Isaac?" Corporal 'Lige asked as he stepped toward the lads, apparently glad of an opportunity to disengage himself from those who had shown they were ready to obey his commands.

Isaac gave such explanation as was within his power, and the old man asked, addressing Nathan:

"What do you know about Fort Ticonderoga?"

The boy made reply much as he had to Isaac, and the corporal questioned him sharply:

"Have you been allowed to roam over the fortification at will?"

"There was no reason why I shouldn't. I know all the boys who live in the fort, an' after I finished what I went for, who'd stop us from goin' 'round?"

"How many soldiers are there in the place?"

"Somewhere about fifty, I should think."

"Women and children?"

"Yes, 'most twice as many, I reckon, though I never counted 'em."

"And you say you know all the ins and outs of the fort?"

"Look here, how many times do you want me to tell you? Of course I do; but what's that got to do with you?"

Nathan spoke in such a disrespectful tone that Isaac literally trembled lest the corporal should fall upon him in his wrath.

"Wait you here till I come back, an' see to it that you don't move from this spot."

The corporal gave this command in his sternest tones, and without waiting for a reply hastened off in the direction where the officers had disappeared, while Nathan stood looking at his new acquaintance in mingled surprise and bewilderment.

"Now, what does that old man mean when he tells me to wait here? What right's he got to order me 'round?"

"Don't get disgruntled," Isaac said imploringly. "I tell you he's a great soldier, and you'll see that his order means something, 'cause the corporal don't make foolish talk."

"Then, what was it I heard when I come up here an' he was tellin' the men what to do, but backed down after findin' they were ready to follow him?"

"That part of it was all right. The time hadn't come for him to carry out his plans, and he explained it. Couldn't you hear him?"

"I heard what he said; but that didn't deceive me."

Then Isaac explained with many a detail why the old man was the ablest soldier in the encampment, and while he was trying to convince the skeptical Nathan, Corporal 'Lige returned, looking very important and mysterious.

"You're to come with me," he said tapping Nathan on the shoulder.

"Where?" the boy asked sharply.

"I said you were to come with me."

"Well, you may say it again before I go. I want to know what you're thinkin' of doin'. I ain't one of these make-believe soldiers that can be ordered 'round by such as you."

During an instant the corporal glowered at the boy as if of a mind to chastise him for his too familiar words, and then Isaac interposed to save his new-found friend from what he feared would be most severe punishment.

"He'll go with you, Corporal 'Lige; don't be angry with him. You see he's a stranger here, an' doesn't understand what——"

"I understand enough not to go till I know what he's about," Nathan cried angrily, wrenching himself free from Isaac's detaining grasp and leaping back a few paces.

The corporal clapped his hand to his side as if to raise a sword, and then realizing that he had no such weapon, said in a remarkably conciliatory tone:

"I told Colonel Allen that you were well acquainted with the interior of the fort, and he would speak with you a few moments."

"Well, if you'd said that in the first place I would have been willing; but when you jumped down on me as if I was one of these recruits, I wasn't goin' to stand it."

"If you are willin' to come, follow me."

"Am I to go with you?" Isaac asked pleadingly, and the corporal hesitated an instant before replying:

"Yes, lad, I don't reckon it'll do any harm, and it may give you an insight into the way we manage military affairs."

CHAPTER VI.

A SQUAD OF FOUR.

ISAAC was in high glee at thus being permitted to visit headquarters, for even though he went there only by permission of Corporal 'Lige and not because his presence was desired, it seemed to him that it was in a certain degree a recognition of the possible fact that he was really a soldier.

Nathan Beman, however, did not appear to think there was any compliment in the invitation. Naturally of a suspicious nature, he fancied in some way this visit might work to his harm, and, in addition, he was displeased by the air of superiority which was observable in the corporal when he addressed any remark to the lad.

The old soldier walked several paces in advance of the boys, and did not appear to think it necessary he should look around to see if they were following, for in his mind a request to visit headquarters was the same as an imperative command, and one which no sane person would venture to disobey.

"I suppose he thinks he can tow me 'round wherever he likes, and I've got a mind to show him he can't," Nathan said to Isaac, motioning with his thumb toward the corporal.

"It's Colonel Allen who wants to see you," Isaac ventured to suggest timidly.

"How do you know?"

"Why Corporal 'Lige said so."

"I ain't certain that makes it true, 'cause he's said a good many things that don't amount to much since I've been around this place."

"But the corporal wouldn't lie," Isaac said solemnly, and Nathan added with a peculiar smile:

"Oh, no, he wouldn't lie!"

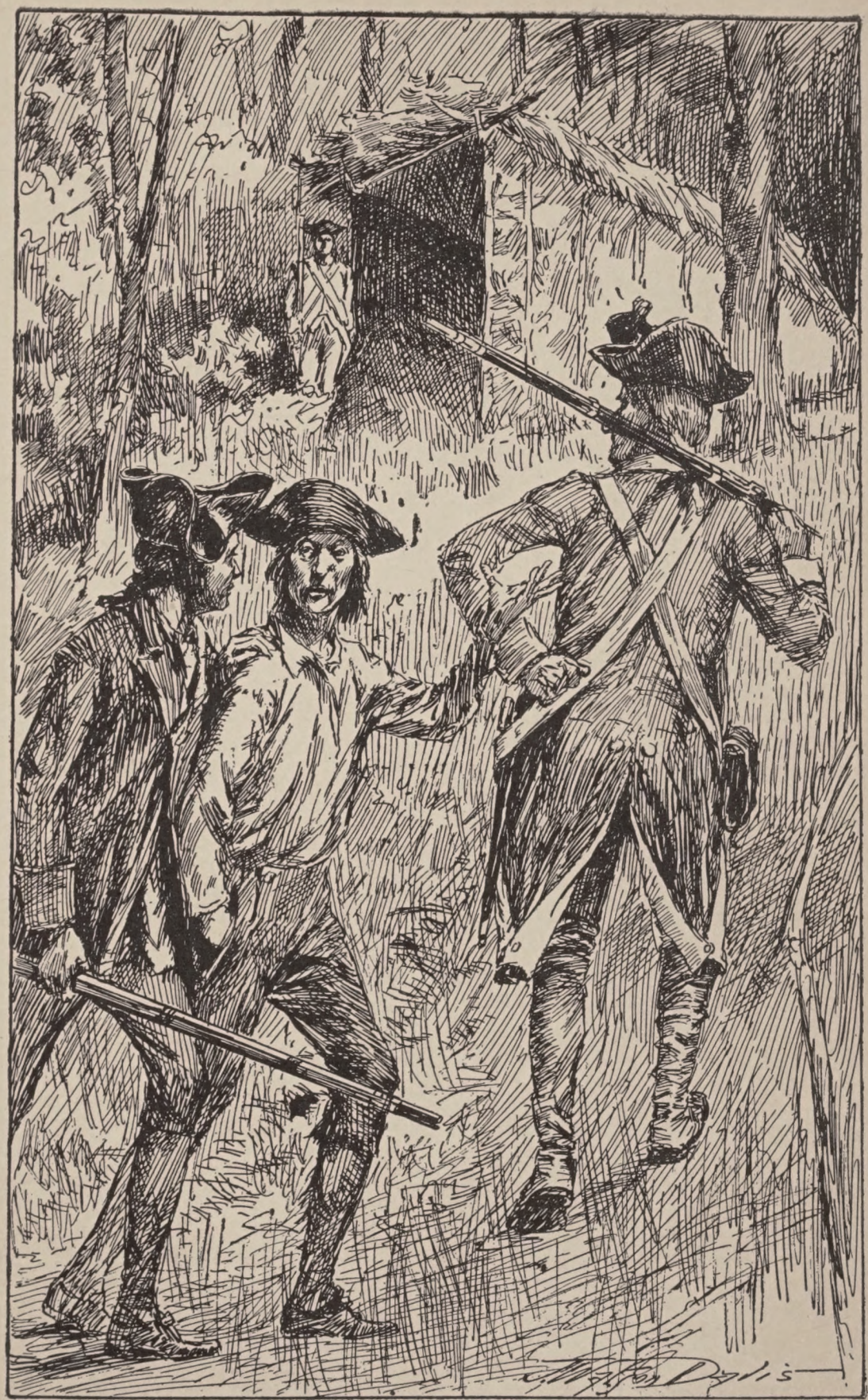
"See here, what have you got against the corporal?"

"Me? Why should I have anything against him?"

"That's what puzzles me; but it seems as though you didn't think very much of him."

"Neither do I. I've seen soldiers up 'round Ticonderoga, not make-believes like the old man, who is all talk an' no substance."

Isaac's face flushed. He was not disposed to let this stranger make sport of Corporal 'Lige, whom he knew was thoroughly versed in the art of warfare, and a brave man withal; but before he had decided in his own mind how the most telling reproof could be



"BUT THE CORPORAL WOULDN'T LIE," ISAAC SAID SOLEMNLY.
Corporal 'Lige's Recruit, p. 114.

administered, they arrived at headquarters, which was neither more nor less than a shelter built of pine boughs, situate so far from the main encampment as to afford some degree of seclusion.

Isaac judged from the eager look on the faces of the officers that this visit was considered by them of more importance than it was by Nathan, and instantly Corporal 'Lige saluted, Colonel Allen asked:

"Are both the lads acquainted with the fort?"

"No, colonel; here is the one who lives up Shoreham way," and he touched Nathan on the shoulder. "This," he added, motioning toward Isaac, "is a recruit I have taken under my protection."

It was evident that Colonel Allen came nearer Nathan's standard of a soldier than Corporal 'Lige, for he stood in a respectful

attitude before the officer as if recognizing the latter's right to question him.

"Is your father alive?" the colonel asked.

"Yes, sir; he owns a farm up on the lake."

"How often have you visited the fort within the past year?"

"Mostly twice a week, sir; never less than once."

"Then you are sufficiently well acquainted with the troops to be able to gain admission at any time?"

"Yes, sir; father sells a lot of truck there, an' I mostly carry it over."

"Are you known to Captain Delaplace?"

"Yes, sir, and his wife as well."

"What brought you here, lad?"

"We heard it said there was a lot of soldiers marchin' up this way, and I didn't have much of anything to do, so come down to have a look at 'em."

"Is it generally known near about where you live that troops are marching toward the fort?"

"I don't think so, sir. Simon York, a trapper, told father, and it was agreed between them that nothing should be spoken about it lest the news get out."

"Do you know how many soldiers there are in the fort now?"

"Near about fifty, sir."

"Hark you, lad, are you minded to do a service for those who would strike a blow against the king?"

"I suppose that would depend on what it was, an' how much I'd make out of it," Nathan replied cautiously.

"Then you are not of the mind to do anything toward establishing the independence of the colonies—it is simply a question of shillings and pence?"

"Well, sir, perhaps it is something like that," Nathan replied, growing confused. "Father thinks since the news came from Concord and Lexington that all the provincials ought to turn to and show their mettle; but mother says so long as the king's troops buy truck and pay good prices for it, it is our business to see that we don't take the bread and butter out of our own mouths."

"I understand; yours is what might be called a divided household," and Colonel Allen looked around with a smile at his companions.

"I guess I don't know what you mean by that, sir; but things our way are about as I have told you."

Corporal 'Lige glowered at the boy who thus unblushingly announced that he measred his patriotism by its value in money, and Isaac wondered that a lad so young could

talk thus pertly to one as high in authority as was Colonel Ethan Allen.

"If you should be paid six shillings, would you be willing to guide one of these gentlemen into the fort and come back with him to where our troops might then be stationed?"

"Which one wants to go?" Nathan asked, not intending to commit himself until the full details were given.

"This gentleman," and Colonel Allen pointed toward Master Phelps, one of the Committee from the Connecticut Assembly.

Nathan looked at him critically a moment, and then asked, as if suspicious some portion of the plan was being kept secret from him:

"Does he want to see Captain Delaplace?"

"He simply wishes to view the fort, and it would be necessary you should pretend he was a neighbor who had come with no other motive than that of curiosity."

"You couldn't pass him off for any neighbor of our'n."

"Why not?"

"'Cause he's dressed too fine, an' his face is so pale that anybody'd know he didn't live 'round here."

"All that may be readily changed," Master Phelps interrupted. "I'll promise to look so nearly like one of your neighbors that there shall be no question raised."

"When do I get the six shillings?" Nathan asked.

"After you have performed the work faithfully to the extent of bringing Master Phelps back to me," Colonel Allen replied, now speaking quite sharply. "It would be a serious matter indeed if you were to betray him to the commandant of the fort, or indicate that this body of men are near at hand."

"If I take the six shillings, I'll earn ' em.

It's none of my business where you folks are, nor what's goin' on 'round the fort; all I'm looking after is the cash I can make."

"Will you undertake the task?"

"Yes," Nathan replied, and then, as if a sudden thought had come to him, added:

"I will if this boy goes along too."

"Is he a friend of yours?"

"I don't s'pose so, 'cause I never saw him before; but it's goin' to be mighty pokey all alone with a man like him," and Nathan pointed to Master Phelps.

At this point Corporal 'Lige stepped forward and saluted, thus attracting the colonel's attention, after which he motioned toward the outside as if to ask for a private interview.

The colonel immediately left the hut, followed by the corporal, and Nathan looked after them suspiciously, whispering to Isaac:

"Now, what do you s'pose that old imitation soldier is up to? He mustn't try to get the best of me."

"You needn't be afraid Corporal 'Lige will do anything that's wrong, 'cause he's an honest man, an' no imitation of a soldier; but a true one."

"I ain't so certain about all that; but you seem to have a pretty good idea of him, so perhaps he is half-way decent after all."

At his point the old soldier and the colonel returned, the latter saying when he was inside the hut once more:

"In order that you may have no lack of company I propose that Master Phelps, Corporal Watkins, and the lad all go with you."

"Who's Watkins?" Nathan whispered to Isaac.

"Why, that's Corporal 'Lige, of course."

"I knew he was stickin' his nose into it some way."

"You'll be glad to have him, 'cause he's jest as good as he can be after you get acquainted."

Nathan remained silent a few seconds, and then asked abruptly:

"When does the crowd want to go?"

"At once. It should be possible to visit the fort before sunset."

"Well, that's accordin' to how fast they can walk; but if they start, an' don't get there in time, father'll keep them overnight without chargin' more'n what's right for the lodgings."

"Very well; you may make ready to set out immediately, and when you have returned the money shall be paid you."

"I'm ready now."

"Master Phelps will need a few moments

in which to prepare himself for the journey, and I doubt not but that the corporal and his comrade have some belongings which they will want to take with them. Remain you here, lad, until the others have made all necessary preparations and are in condition for the journey."

This was a command which Nathan could not well disobey; but he looked toward Isaac while the latter was hurried away by Corporal 'Lige, as if there were yet other questions concerning this project which he would like to ask.

"Don't turn back, lad," the old soldier said when his *protégé* made a move as if to return. "There's to be no time lost, and you'll have good opportunity for talking once we're on the road."

"How did it happen the colonel sent you and me?" Isaac asked when the two were

so far from headquarters that his words could not be overheard.

"That's owing to the hint I gave Colonel Allen when that young skinflint made his talk. A lad who won't take sides in this matter 'twixt the colonies and the king, but holds out for whatever money he can get, is not to be trusted, accordin' to my way of thinkin'. While he was settin' himself down for a cold-blooded, close-fisted specimen of humanity such as you wouldn't look for in one so young, I made up my mind that there had best be a sharp watch kept of him, else a word or two might be dropped at the fort which would upset all our plans."

"Do you believe he would take Colonel Allen's money and then betray him?"

"I am certain a lad who would haggle for six shillings under such circumstances as this would sell out to the next man who

offered half as much more, and the colonel was of the same mind after I'd mentioned the matter."

"I don't see why I should go."

"Don't you want to?" the corporal asked in surprise.

"Of course it would be more pleasant than marching with the troops; but still I can't understand what good it is possible for me to do."

"I don't reckon you will be of any service; but the boy had taken a notion to have you with him, so it seemed like a good chance for me to put my oar in, and between the two of us I reckon he won't have much show of playing double."

In a very few seconds the corporal and Isaac had made their preparations for the journey, which simply consisted in gathering up all their belongings, much to the surprise

of the lad, who questioned whether, if they were to go to the fort apparently from motives of curiosity, it was well they carried muskets.

"If it seems necessary we can leave them where this boy lives; but it is certain we cannot depend on any one else bringing our luggage along for us, so take what we own, lad, an' then be at home wherever we stop."

When the two returned to headquarters they found Master Phelps awaiting their coming, and Nathan kept close and suspicious watch upon each person and everything within his range of vision.

The messenger from the General Assembly had made a very decided change in his personal appearance, and Isaac was forced to look twice before feeling positive this was the same Master Phelps whom he had seen a few moments before.

Now he was clad after the fashion of a farmer, in garments which he had probably borrowed from some member of the troop; his face was browned and soiled, while his hands were exceedingly dirty, and even Nathan must have been satisfied that the commandant of the fort would not see in this visitor other than he professed to be.

"If that lad had a trifle more sense he'd understand there wasn't anything to be gained by deceiving him," the corporal said in a low tone to Isaac; "but he's so self-opinionated he thinks everybody is plotting mischief against him."

"You don't seem to like him very well," Isaac ventured to say, and Corporal 'Lige replied emphatically:

"Neither do I."

"Then unless he an' I go off by ourselves, I don't reckon this will be a very pleasant

journey," Isaac said to himself as he thought of the corporal and Nathan, each distrusting and making complaint against the other.

Colonel Allen was determined there should be no delay in the setting out of this spying expedition, and immediately the corporal and Isaac showed themselves he insisted that the little party start without further loss of time.

Young Beman at once showed his preference as to a traveling companion, for he ranged himself by Isaac's side, and when the corporal would have joined them, said curtly:

"You'd better keep back with the other man. I s'pose I'll have to lead the way, and when we strike off the main road the path ain't wide enough for more than two."

"Don't the highway lead to Shoreham?" the corporal asked suspiciously.

"Yes; but we can save more'n four miles by cuttin' through the woods," and Nathan

hurried Isaac on as a means both of putting an end to the corporal's inquiries, and forcing him to join Master Phelps.

Once the journey was well begun young Beman presented himself in a more favorable light.

He ceased to refer to the corporal as an "imitation soldier," and gave no further evidence of being suspicious; but qestioned Isaac as to what the town of Pittsfield was like, and concerning Boston, where young Rice had visited two years previous in company with his father.

Master Phelps was not accustomed to this method of traveling, and when the guide struck into the woods where the trail lead alternately over a hilly and swampy country he was soon forced to declare that he could not proceed at such a rapid pace.

"You will have to slacken up a bit," Cor-

poral 'Lige shouted, "for the gentleman ain't used to this kind of footin'."

"We can't go very slow, else we shan't get to the fort before sunset," Nathan replied indifferently, and Master Phelps said in a tone which admitted of no argument:

"It isn't possible for me to keep pace with you. If it so be we fail to finish the journey before dark, we can take lodgings with your father and accomplish our purpose early to-morrow morning."

The prospect of introducing to his father guests who would pay for all they received, was so satisfactory to young Beman that he made no protest at being thus forced to slacken pace. It may be he was unnecessarily slow from this time out, for it was already dark when they arrived at the guide's home, and Nathan said to Master Phelps before entering the building:

"I'll tell father you folks want to stay all night, and that's as much as I need say. If you count on explaining why you have come, it's none of my business. The officer what hired me said I was to keep quiet about everything I'd seen down to the camp, so I might as well begin by holding my tongue."

Then Nathan ushered the guests into the kitchen, where was found Mr. Beman sitting by the fireplace, for the night had grown cold and chill, while his wife was preparing the supper.

"Here are some travelers who want to stay all night," Nathan announced, and added in a lower tone to Isaac, "Come out to the barn with me while I do my chores; there's no fun in sittin' here."

Five minutes later the three men followed the boys, and Isaac fancied it was Master Phelps' intention to explain to the farmer the

purpose of their coming, but that he feared to do so in the presence of the mistress of the household, who, if her son had quoted her words correctly, favored the king's representatives rather than the colonists in the doings which had lately arisen.

Nathan took good care that his new friend should perform a full share of the evening's work, and Isaac assisted in milking the cows, carrying water, and chopping wood until he had of a surety earned as bountiful a spread as could be set before him.

The farmer and his guests did not appear until they had been summoned twice after the appetizing meal was placed upon the table, and while she was impatiently awaiting them, Mrs. Beman questioned her son sharply as to what business his father could have with the strangers.

For a time Nathan avoided making any

direct answer; but when his mother pressed him closely he answered her quite as pertly as he had Colonel Allen, by saying:

"I'm to be paid for holdin' my tongue about whatever is goin' on—I'll have six shillings by this time to-morrow night, an' I can't afford to talk to anybody."

"Six shillings just for holding your tongue, Nathan?"

"Well, it's for that an' a little more; but I ain't goin' to make any talk, so if you want me to earn the money you'd better stop askin' questions."

"Is your father going to get as much?"

"I don't know anything about his trades; it's all I can do to take care of my own, an' work 'em through accordin' to the agreement, when there's so much questionin' goin' on," Nathan replied quite sharply, and his mother, who was evidently as prudent as

himself in financial matters, desisted from pressing him further.

After this brief conversation Isaac felt positive Corporal 'Lige need have no fear regarding possible treachery on Nathan's part, for if the boy refused to tell his mother he surely would be close-mouthed in the presence of others.

When the party finally made their appearance and were seated at the supper table, the three men evidently on the best of terms with each other, Mrs. Beman's curiosity was still further aroused, as was but natural. Yet no word was dropped during the progress of the meal, nor so long as the guests remained downstairs, which could have given her the slightest clew.

It was Nathan's purpose to have Isaac for a bed-fellow; but to this his mother made emphatic protest, and when the time for

retiring came the three guests were conducted to a room adjoining the kitchen, while the farmer's family retired to the loft above.

Then it was in cautious whispers that Isaac told the corporal why he felt confident there was no danger Nathan would betray them, and the old soldier said grimly:

"He didn't have a fair test when he was talking with his mother, 'cause there was no chance she would pay him for the information. What I'm afeared of is that some one may offer him more than Colonel Allen did, an' then I'll go bail everything he knows will come out in short order."

"I don't believe he would do other than he has agreed."

"Well, lad, you hold to that opinion, an' I'll have my own, an' 'twixt the two of us I reckon he won't be able to do any mischief. His father is a proper kind of man; holds to

it that the colonists are right in making war against the king, and stands ready to do all he can in furtherance of the cause. Therefore if this young jack-a-napes holds himself too high an' mighty in the mornin' we shan't be wholly in his power."

When day dawned, however, Corporal 'Lige had no reason to complain of Nathan.

The lad showed himself of the mind to earn the six shillings, and now that he was at home, appeared less suspicious of his companion's intentions.

Perhaps this was due in part to the fact that his father, well knowing what the visitors would have, took it upon himself to give the guide positive instructions, and at an early hour Nathan set out accompanied by Master Phelps.

It was his intention that Isaac should be one of the party; but to this the farmer made

decided objections, insisting that more than one stranger might cause suspicion, and therefore it was that Corporal 'Lige and his pupil remained quietly at the farm until noon of that day, when the delegate from the Connecticut Assembly returned well pleased with what he had seen.

In a private conversation held with the corporal he reported that strong though the fortification was, the walls were in a state of great dilapidation; few, if any, precautions taken against surprise; military discipline was hardly known, and the sentinels in particular were remiss in their duty.

Master Phelps had no difficulty in making such investigations as he chose, and declared that in his opinion, providing the garrison could be taken by surprise, there was nothing to prevent a capture of the fort.

However, in order that all this might be

effected, boats were necessary, and there was not a sufficient number on the shores near about to convey one-tenth of the men in Colonel Allen's command.

"It is well you have come with me," Master Phelps said to the corporal, "for while I am returning, you and the lad, accompanied by the farmer, shall set about seizing all the boats which may be found in this vicinity, having due heed to your movements, however, lest you proceed so far in the direction of Crown Point as to arouse suspicions in that quarter. Work as expeditiously as is in your power, for the troops will arrive here not later than midnight, and it is absolutely necessary there be ready proper craft to convey them across the lake."

Then Master Phelps, still holding to Nathan as a guide, set off to meet the force, which was believed to be rapidly approach-

ing, and the farmer said impatiently to the corporal:

"If it so be, sir, you count on carrying out the orders given 'twixt now and dark, it is time for us to be moving, for boats are not plentiful hereabout, and we shall have a long tramp before gathering as many as will carry your force across."

CHAPTER VII.

TICONDEROGA.

It was not necessary Farmer Beman should urge Corporal 'Lige to make haste in this matter which had been intrusted to him, for the old soldier understood full well how necessary it was that means of transportation for the troops should be at hand when the men arrived, and had good reason to believe that such task as was assigned him could not be readily performed.

He even showed himself more eager in the work than the farmer, for when the latter would have delayed in order to eat the noon-day meal, the old man positively refused as he said:

"We can have dinner after Ticonderoga has

been taken, but until then there must be no thought of rest. Although as I understand, detachments are to be sent to Skenesborough and Panton, it is not positive they can get boats from there to this point in time, and we must act as if believing the matter of transportation depended wholly upon ourselves."

Had Nathan been there to witness the old man's activity after some special work had been set for him, he might have changed his opinion about the corporal's being an "imitation soldier."

He walked here and there, tiring his companions almost to the verge of exhaustion, and yet apparently as fresh as when he began; but when the sun set he had only seventeen boats drawn up on the shore at that point where it was supposed the troops would halt, and Isaac believed there were

absolutely no more within the radius of a dozen miles.

"I allow you've done your best, corporal," Farmer Beman said as the three stood looking ruefully at the small number of boats, many of which would be loaded to the water's edge with half a dozen men, "and it now stands us in hand to get supper, considerin' we missed our dinner so completely."

"There must be no time wasted. Let Isaac run up to the house for such provisions as your wife can spare, and we'll set out in some other direction, for every craft that we add to this 'ere lot is jest so much gained."

"You may set out in as many directions as you choose; but you will not find another boat this night," Farmer Beman said decidedly, and with what was very like a show of ill-temper. "I've guided you to

every place I know of, and if you are so headstrong as to keep on when there's little show of accomplishing anything, you must go alone."

"And that's exactly what I shall do," the corporal said emphatically. "Even though I knew nothing would be accomplished I should keep on workin' until the force arrived, 'cause it isn't for me to set down and say my task is finished."

"If that's your idea of soldierin', then I'm mighty glad I haven't enlisted," and the farmer went deliberately to his home, convinced, as was his son, that the old corporal was not as well skilled in warfare as he would have it appear.

Even Isaac was disposed to protest against his teacher's decision, and urged that it was little less than folly to think of adding to the fleet, for Farmer Beman had declared posi-

tively there were no more boats in the vicinity.

To this the corporal replied with some warmth, and there might have been a serious undermining of friendship had not Nathan arrived just at that moment.

"Well, is that all you've done this afternoon?" he asked sharply, and the corporal turned on him fiercely.

"Do you know of other boats?"

"Seems to me there's more'n a hundred 'round here."

"Where are they?"

Nathan began a list, mentioning this neighbor or that, and as often seeing among the collection the craft to which he referred, until finally he was forced to admit that to the best of his knowledge there were no more.

"I thought you knew of more than a hundred?" Corporal 'Lige cried fiercely.

"That's what I reckoned myself; but when I come to figger 'em up they wasn't there."

"You come with us, an' it may be we'll find another."

"What? After I've walked down to Castleton an' back to-day, I go with you out rowin'? It'll take more'n six shillings to hire me to do anything like that this night; besides you haven't got time before the troops get here."

"How near are they?" Corporal 'Lige asked in alarm.

"Well, they ought'er be showin' up by this time, for I wasn't five minutes ahead of 'em, and—there they are now!"

Nathan pointed to a group of men who had just come into the clearing from amid the thicket, and as the old man looked up one of the party motioned for him to approach.

Although Nathan had announced that he

was nearly exhausted from his ardent labors, his weariness was not so great as his curiosity, and he followed the corporal and Isaac.

It was Colonel Arnold, Colonel Easton and the two representatives of the Connecticut Assembly, who had thus come into view, and the former, after explaining to Corporal 'Lige that the troops had been halted in the thicket lest they might be seen from the fort even in the gloom, asked concerning the means of transportation.

Chagrined though he was at his inability to do more, the corporal was forced to admit that he had hardly a sufficient number of boats to take over seventy-five or eighty of the men; but this the colonel did not at the time believe to be of great importance, for it seemed positive Captain Herrick from Skenesborough, and Captain Douglas from

Panton, must before midnight send craft enough to transfer the entire force.

Therefore it was that the leaders of the party appeared well satisfied, and the corporal must have come to the conclusion that he had fretted himself without reasonable cause.

"You will remain in charge of the fleet," Colonel Allen said to the old soldier, "with the boy to act as your lieutenant, and you may detail two men as oarsmen in each boat. We will set out as soon as the remainder of the craft arrives."

Then it was that Nathan believed he saw an opportunity to add to his earnings of the day, and made the proposition that if the further sum of four shillings be paid him he would aid in ferrying the troops across, providing the work could be finished before midnight; but if it should be delayed until

morning he desired to be paid twice that amount.

No one seemed disposed to take advantage of this very generous offer; now that his particular portion of the work had been done, it was very much as if every one save Isaac ignored him.

"That's jest the way with these people from down 'round Bennington. They get all they can for the least money, an' then throw you off. I ought to have held out for more'n six shillings when I took that Master Phelps, as you call him, over to the fort."

"But you got paid very well," Isaac suggested.

"Yes, so far as it went; but if I'd thought of all that's going on I would have put up my price, or held out half-hired till the business was over."

Now for the first time since their meeting

did Corporal 'Lige's pupil speak sharply to this friend.

"You should be ashamed to demand money for such work as you have done this day," he said stoutly. "Whatever resistance be made to the king is for the benefit of all the colonies, and if each one insisted on being paid, as you've done, his majesty might work his will, for there would be none to say him nay."

Young Beman was both surprised and injured by this outburst.

"That's what I call pretty tough, after all I've done for you!" he cried sharply. "If it hadn't been for me you wouldn't have got over here and had a chance of staying all night in our house."

"I didn't have a chance without paying for it, as I understand Master Phelps is to settle with your father for our accommodations."

"Yes, an' just before I come away mother told me she thought as likely as not father'd be such a fool as to refuse to take a cent; but I ain't goin' to quarrel with you, even if I have been defrauded of what is my right. Come up to the house an' get some supper, won't you?"

"You mean that I shall partake of the food after I have helped you do the chores?"

"Well, yes, something like that. Of course you don't expect to get your supper for nothing."

"No; I'd rather go without than do more work now after tramping around all the afternoon. There'll be something in the way of rations found in camp, an' I'll take my chances there."

Young Beman turned away quickly as if angry with this new friend, and observing the movement Corporal 'Lige asked Isaac:

"What's the trouble with yon skinflint? Haven't been quarrelin', eh?"

"I think I have seen enough of a lad who must be paid for all he does at such a time," and having said this Isaac went in search of his supper, not minded to make further explanations.

Weary though he was, the lad was soon forced to aid the corporal in getting the boats' crews together, and after it was fully dark those selected to act as oarsmen were marched to the water's edge, that they might be in readiness when their services were required.

After this there was nothing to be done save await the coming of the expected craft.

The men were not allowed to build fires lest the lights should be seen by those in the fort, and so cautious was the leader that even loud talking was forbidden, therefore

the men could do little else than spend the time in sleeping, a fact by no means disagreeable to the majority after their march of the day.

On the shore of the lake the oarsmen followed the example of their comrades in the woods, until all save the corporal and Isaac were wrapped in the unconsciousness of slumber.

The old soldier, considering himself responsible for the safety of the fleet, would neither lie down nor allow his young lieutenant to do so, and they paced to and fro on the sand keeping sharp lookout for the expected boats, but without avail.

Midnight came, and yet no word from either of the two detachments which had been sent in search of means of transportation.

Colonel Allen and Colonel Arnold, growing

impatient because of the long delay, came to the shore, and Corporal 'Lige stood stiff as the barrel of his own musket when he saluted.

"How many can be taken in the boats you have here?" Colonel Arnold asked.

"Somewhere about eighty, sir, and if it so be you give the word we can ferry the whole party across in three trips."

"That would never do," Colonel Arnold replied decidedly. "We must go in a body or give up all hope of surprising the garrison."

In this Colonel Allen was agreed, and the two officers remained near at hand, now pacing to and fro, and again listening intently for those sounds which would tell of the hoped-for arrival, until it lacked no more than two hours of daybreak, when they were joined by Master Phelps and Colonel Easton,

the latter saying sufficiently loud for Isaac to distinguish the words:

"Unless such a move is made as may be possible with the means at our disposal, the plan of capturing the fort has come to naught, for it isn't reasonable to suppose our party can remain in this vicinity throughout to-morrow without some intimation being given the commandant by those who live in the vicinity."

What was evidently a conversation between the officers followed; but it was conducted in so low a tone that Isaac could not hear the words, and he remained near at hand expecting to receive the order to launch the boats, until Colonel Easton called him by name.

"You know where is situated the home of the lad who guided Master Phelps into the fort?"

"Oh, yes, sir; it is but a short distance from here."

"Go you there, and bring the boy."

"I question if he will come, sir, unless I make explanation of why he is wanted, or promise that he shall be paid for thus disturbing himself. He seems to have no thought save of money."

"Yet, his father is with us in this matter, I am told, so far as opinion goes."

"Yes, sir."

"Then go and rouse the lad; if he refuses to come, say to the father that Colonel Allen requires the services of the boy, and if he answers not what we make as a request, I will send a detachment to enforce a demand."

Isaac obeyed promptly, not finding it a simple matter to make his way across the field in the darkness; but finally succeeding

after one or two tumbles, each of which left their marks in the shape of a scratch or contusion, and with the first knock at the door he heard Farmer Beman's voice asking as to who was there.

"It is Isaac Rice, sir, and Colonel Easton has sent me to say that Colonel Allen desires the attendance of Nathan at once."

"What does he want him for?" the shrill voice of Mrs. Beman cried, and Isaac replied truthfully that he did not know, since no explanation had been made him.

Then could be heard the farmer, his wife, and son in what was evidently an altercation, until no less than five minutes had passed, at the end of which time young Nathan appeared in the doorway fully clad, as he asked impatiently:

"How much are they willing to give me for coming out in the night like this?"

"I think it would be well if you depended upon their generosity, otherwise it is in Colonel Allen's power to force you to do as he asks," Isaac replied curtly, and from the inside Farmer Beman shouted:

"Get you gone, boy, and do their bidding. If I again hear you demanding money for such services, your jacket shall be tanned with the stoutest hickory switch I can get hereabouts."

One would have said young Beman was the most abused lad in the province of New York, as he followed Isaac down to the shore, alternately bewailing his ill-fortune because he had not given Captain Delaplace information of the coming of such a body of men, trusting to that officer's generosity for a greater sum of money than was given him by Colonel Allen, and vehemently protesting he would not stir one step from the encamp-

ment without being well paid for his services. Colonel Easton, overhearing this threat, stepped directly in front of the grumbling lad and called for Corporal 'Lige, much to the surprise of both the boys, saying when the old soldier arrived:

"Corporal, it is Colonel Allen's wish that this lad remain near him after we have landed on the other side, to show the way into the fort. He is not disposed to do so willingly, it seems, and it shall be your duty to see that the order be obeyed. If he attempts to escape, shoot him down; but give him gentle treatment so long as he complies with your requests."

"I'll take care of him, sir, that you may depend on," the corporal said grimly, and from that instant Nathan Beman remained silent regarding his desire to be paid for acting the part of guide.

Because of having received this order the corporal was forced to relinquish his position as commodore of the fleet, and thus it was that he and his pupil were among the few who entered Ticonderoga early that morning.

Within five minutes after Nathan had apparently been subdued, word was passed for as many of the Green Mountain Boys as could be conveyed in the boats to embark at once, and almost at the same moment Colonel Easton, turning to the old man, said:

"It is your duty, Corporal 'Lige, to take passage in the same craft that carries our leader, for the lad of whom you have charge must be kept where Colonel Allen can speak to him at an instant's notice."

Had the men been allowed to follow their inclinations, the frail boats which formed the fleet would have been swamped even before they pushed off from the shore, for every

member of the troop was eager to be with the first division, and it was only after considerable difficulty in the way of restraining the men that the different craft were properly and safely loaded.

When the corporal and the lad who was thus virtually held prisoner entered the boat where was Colonel Allen, Isaac followed as if it was his right so to do.

He could not fancy any position of affairs where he would be debarred from remaining with the man who had taken him "under his wing," and it so chanced that in the excitement of embarking he passed aboard unheeded by who might have checked him.

The darkness of night was just giving way to the gray light of dawn when the little fleet put off from the shore, and without being really aware he did so, Isaac counted the number of those who were thus afloat.

Beside the officers, there were eighty-three, including himself and Nathan, and it was no longer reasonable to expect that those who had been sent to Skenesborough and Panton would arrive in time to be of assistance.

"Will they try to take the fort with so few?" he asked in a whisper of Corporal 'Lige, and the latter added emphatically:

"If all that is told of Colonel Allen be true, he wouldn't hesitate to make an attempt single-handed."

"But surely we cannot hope to do much, for fifty men behind a fort should be a much larger force than ours."

"Savin' and exceptin' these men be surprised, as our leader counts them in Fort Ticonderoga will be," the corporal replied, and then placed his finger on his lips that the lad should cease talking, for the order had

been passed from boat to boat just before the fleet left the shore that no conversation be indulged in.

Nathan, sulky because of having been put in charge of the man whom he disliked, gave no apparent attention to anything.

In almost perfect silence the journey by water was made, and brought to an end just as the day was breaking, when, in obedience to signals rather than words, the men disembarked and were formed in three ranks close to the water's ege.

Then it was that Colonel Allen advanced to where the men might hear when he spoke in the tone of ordinary conversation, and said with a calmness which in itself was impressive:

"There are but few of us here to undertake the work which was cut out; but yet each of you should be a match for any two

whom we may meet. Should we delay until all the force can be ferried across, there will be no longer opportunity to surprise the garrison; therefore we must act for our comrades as well as ourselves, remembering that should we falter we cast shame on them also. Now, lads, it is my purpose to march into the fort, and I only ask that you follow where I lead."

The officers stepped forward quickly to make certain there should be no cheering, and wheeling about with true military precision Colonel Allen started forward, Colonel Arnold by his side, and Corporal 'Lige with Nathan and Isaac directly in the rear.

Behind them came eighty of the Green Mountain Boys.

There was no command given.

Each of the men copied the movements of the leader, and noiselessly but rapidly they

made their way up the heights toward the sallyport, Isaac's face paling as he went, for he believed of a surety now was come the time when he should hear the clash of arms and find himself in the midst of combatants, each striving to take the other's life.

On passing an angle at the rear of the fortification the entrance of a trench or covert-way was come upon and here they surprised a sentinel half asleep, leaning against the earthwork.

Awakened thus suddenly, and seeing what he might naturally suppose to be the advance guard of a large force directly upon him, he took hasty aim at Colonel Allen and pulled the trigger.

Involuntarily Isaac closed his eyes, believing their leader must be killed at such short range, but the weapon hung fire and the

sentinel took to his heels through this trench, the attacking party following at full speed.

The fugitive led the way to the parade-ground within the barracks, where was found another sentinel, and he made a thrust with his bayonet at Colonel Easton, who was side by side with the leaders; but had hardly raised his weapon before a blow from the flat of Colonel Allen's sword sent him headlong to the ground.

At this the men, unable longer to control themselves, gave vent to a tremendous shout, and without orders separated into two divisions, each bent on gaining possession of the barrack ranges.

As bees swarm out of their hives, so did he startled redcoats rush from the buildings, and it seemed to Isaac as if instantly each man appeared he was disarmed by one of the Green Mountain Boys, who, as fast as he

secured a captive, marched him to the center of the parade-ground in order that he might not block up the entrance of the barracks.

Now was come the moment when Nathan's services were required.

It was no longer possible to keep silence, for the shouts of the men must have aroused every one within the inclosure, and turning quickly, Colonel Allen cried in a loud voice:

"Get you before me with that lad, corporal and let him lead the way to the commandant's quarters."

Nathan did not require urging.

He understood that this man had come with serious purpose, and knew full well it might be dangerous for him to hang back.

Darting ahead as swiftly as the corporal would allow, he conducted Colonel Allen to the door of Captain Delaplace's dwelling,

and the leader gave three resounding knocks with the hilt of his sword, as he shouted:

"Surrender this fort, commandant! Surrender at once in order to save the lives of your men!"

The door was quickly opened in response to this demand, and a half-clad man, over whose shoulder could be seen the frightened face of a woman, appeared in the doorway.

Before he could speak Colonel Allen cried:

"I order you instantly to surrender, sir!"

"By whose authority do you make such demand?" the captain cried with dignity.

"In the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress!"

These words sounded in Isaac's ears like the thunder of cannon, and even while he questioned to himself if it were possible this handful of men had really captured the fortress, Ticonderoga was surrendered.

BEFORE HE COULD SPEAK, COLONEL ALLEN CRIED: "I ORDER YOU INSTANTLY TO SURRENDER, IN THE NAME OF THE GREAT JEHOVAH AND THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS."

Corporal 'Lige's Recruit, p. 168.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN INTERRUPTION.

NATHAN, who had looked upon the men under Colonel Allen much as he had Corporal 'Lige, was literally amazed by this ready submission of the king's troops, standing silent and motionless by the side of Isaac as the garrison was paraded without arms, and the surrender made in due form.

Some days afterward Isaac learned that the spoils of war at this place were one hundred and twenty iron cannon, fifty swivels, two ten-inch mortars, one howitzer, one cohorn, ten tons musket-balls, three cart-loads flints, thirty gun-carriages, a quantity of shells, a large amount of material for boat building, one hundred stand of small arms,

ten casks of powder, two brass cannon, thirty barrels of flour and eighteen barrels of pork.

Forty-eight soldiers were surrendered and preparations were at once begun to send these, together with the women and children, to Hartford.

Hardly was the surrender made complete when such of the troops as had been left on the opposite shore under Seth Warner, arrived in a schooner, much to the surprise of all, until it was learned that Captain Herrick, who had been sent to Skenesborough to seize the son of the governor, had succeeded in his mission without bloodshed.

He took not only the young major, but twelve negroes and attendants, seized the schooner owned by the elder Skene, and had come down the lake in the early morning with the hope of aiding in the capture of Ticonderoga.

Isaac had supposed this victory would end the adventure, and was saying to himself that his experience had been rather pleasing than otherwise, so much so in fact that he almost regretted the time was near at hand for him to return home, when he saw, much to his surprise, a portion of the troops being formed in line as if to leave Ticonderoga.

Corporal 'Lige had been assigned to the task of overhauling the goods in the warehouse for the purpose of making out a list of the same, and it was to him that Isaac, followed by Nathan, went for information.

"Forming in line, eh?" the old man asked as, wiping the perspiration from his face, he went outside to have a look around, and instantly he noted the preparations which were making, turned back to his work as if it was of but little concern.

"What is the meaning of that, corporal?"

Isaac suggested. "Are we going back without having stayed here a single day?"

"There will be no turnin' back, lad, until the work is finished, and the fort at Crown Point yet remains to be taken. I allow Seth Warner is goin' to tackle that job, which won't be a difficult one, since it is said there are not above a dozen men in the garrison."

"Suppose you an' I go with 'em?" Nathan suggested, now no longer eager to demand money for his services; but, fired by what he had seen, and burning to participate in new conquests.

"What do you say, corporal?" Isaac asked, feeling that it was necessary to gain the old man's permission before he could join in the adventure.

Again Corporal 'Lige went to the door of the warehouse, looking about him with the

air of a weather-prophet, after which he replied in a careless tone:

"I don't reckon it makes any difference whether you lads are here or sailin' 'round the lake, therefore if Seth Warner gives his permission, you may go so far as I am concerned; but it'll be only a question of whifflin' from one point to another, for while the wind holds in this direction I'm allowin' none of the force will reach Crown Point."

"The wind is likely to haul 'round after sunset, so let us take our chances," Nathan whispered, and Isaac was not loth to embark.

Therefore the two started across the parade-ground for the purpose of speaking with the old hunter—Seth Warner—when Captain Herrick, who had just made his report of the night's work at Skenesborough, halted the boys by saying:

"I reckon you two lads are the ones Colo-

nel Allen would speak with at once? You will find him in the commandant's quarters."

"He is most likely thinkin' of payin' me for comin' over last night," Nathan said as the two turned to obey the command, "and I have made up my mind not to take money for the service."

Isaac looked at his companion in surprise, and the latter added almost shame-facedly:

"I reckon father was right when he said every one in the colonies should do all he could in this cause, and, besides, it looks to me as if the king's troops would speedily get the worst of it."

Young Beman was not unlike many in the neighborhood who in after-days were royalists or patriots as the cause of freedom grew weak or strong.

However, Nathan had no opportunity to refuse a payment of money for his services,

for when the lads stood before Colonel Allen, the latter said in a tone of command, and yet with the air of one asking a favor:

"I want to send a messenger to Sudbury. Do you think you can find the place, Isaac Rice?"

"I will show him the way, sir," Nathan said promptly, and the colonel favored him with a glance of surprise, but took no further heed of his sudden complaisance.

"At that settlement you will find one Captain Remember Baker; tell him what has been done at this point, and say it is my wish he join me here without delay. Select the lightest boat you can find for crossing the lake, and make all haste."

Then the colonel turned away, intent upon the work of preparing a list of the garrison which had surrendered, and some of his officers entering for further instructions pre-

vented the boys from making any inquiries concerning the mission.

On leaving the quarters, Nathan, eager to serve this new commander of the fort with all possible celerity, would have hastened at once to the shore in order to set out, but that Isaac insisted upon giving Corporal 'Lige due information as to their proposed movements, much to the displeasure of young Beman, who claimed that the old soldier was of no account when the colonel had given orders.

"Well, this one is," Isaac said stoutly. "He's a good friend of mine, and I wouldn't think of leavin' without first tellin' him, no matter whose orders I was obeying."

"Well, I s'pose you must have your own way, but the time will come when you won't think so much of that pig-headed old man as you do now."

To this ill-natured remark the lad did not

reply, but on presenting himself to Corporal 'Lige and explaining what he was about to do, the latter, still busy with his work of taking account of the stores, made very much the same remark as had Nathan.

"Don't consider, lad, that you are to report to me when ordered on duty. Be careful of yourself; do not run into danger needlessly, and get you gone without delay, for Colonel Allen is a man who doesn't take kindly to loiterers."

Nathan showed himself to be one who could perform a task promptly and in good order when it suited his pleasure so to do.

He it was who selected the boat in which they were to cross the lake; borrowed a musket from one of the men that he might not be forced to make the journey weaponless, and succeeding in begging such an

amount of provisions as would serve them for dinner.

While these few preparations were being made, Warner, with a detachment of twenty five men from Colonel Allen's regiment, put off on his journey to Crown Point, and after watching them a moment Nathan Beman said in a tone of one who is satisfied with himself:

"It's jest as well we didn't have a chance to go with that crowd, for they won't get anywhere near there until the wind changes, and it seems as though whoever is in charge of the job, ought to know it."

"I suppose the plan is to take the fort by surprise, as was this one, and unless our people get there soon, it will be a failure, because the news of what has been done here must fly over the country quickly."

"While the wind blows this way, and so strong, no one will get up the lake, therefore

the garrison won't learn of the surrender of Ticonderoga unless some one goes across the country. However, we needn't bother, seein's our work is all cut an' dried, and we had better not waste too much time here."

Isaac was beginning to entertain a very friendly feeling toward this lad now that he had changed his views so entirely regarding the value of his services, and, as a matter of course, Nathan could be a most pleasing traveling companion when it suited his purpose, as it did at present.

The journey to Sudbury proved to be a longer one than was anticipated.

A strong wind which blew directly down the lake, carried the boys fully two miles below the point at which they should have landed, and Nathan was much averse to following back along the shore in order to gain the trail which led to Sudbury.

"It will be just that much useless labor," he said emphatically, "and I am not given to walking more than may be necessary."

"But there's a chance of going astray if we strike across from here," Isaac suggested, for, as has already been shown, he knew little of woodcraft, and this traveling blindly around a section of the country where there was every reason to believe enemies might be found was not to his liking.

"I'd be a mighty poor sort of a guide if I couldn't go across from here without straying from the course so much as a dozen yards," Master Beman said decidedly. "To walk up the shore two miles or more only for the purpose of striking the trail, is foolishness."

"But the thicket is so dense here," Isaac suggested timidly, almost fearing to venture an opinion lest he should provoke the mirth of his companion. "It will be harder

to make our way through than to go around."

Nathan made no reply.

He bestowed upon Corporal 'Lige's recruit a glance as of pity, and then, without further words, plunged into the underbrush.

Master Rice could do no less than follow.

Before the boys had traveled half an hour on the direct course to Sudbury, it is more than probable young Beman repented of having attempted to make a "short cut," for the advance was indeed difficult.

At times it was really painful to force one's way through the tangled foliage, while now and again the boys found themselves floundering over swampy land; but Nathan made no complaint because he was responsible for having taken such a course, and Isaac hardly dared protest lest his companion should be angered.

"I still maintain that it was better to come this way than travel two miles in vain," Nathan said as he threw himself upon the ground, and Corporal 'Lige's recruit ventured to suggest mildly:

"I'd rather walk three miles on the shore than one here, where a fellow is obliged to fight his way through."

"Perhaps you know this country better than I do, and would take the lead?"

"Not so. You left Ticonderoga as guide, and it would not be seemly in me, who am a stranger here as well as a lad unaccustomed to this sort of warfare which is now being conducted, to do other than follow your lead; but——"

The remark which was intended to soothe the irritation in the guide's breast was not concluded, for Isaac was interrupted by the sudden and unexpected appearance of three

men, who came upon the boys as if from an ambush.

"Hullo!" Master Beman cried carelessly as if something in the way of a salutation was expected from him.

Instead of replying to this hail the two lads were seized roughly, and without a word the strangers, taking possession of the musket, began searching the messengers' clothing as if expecting something of value or importance would be found.

"Look here! What are you about?" Nathan cried angrily, while Isaac submitted in silence, for he understood that these three might be enemies to the cause. "What do you mean by handling me in this shape?"

"Better keep your tongue between your teeth, young Beman," one of the men said in a surly tone. "When we ask for information

there'll be time enough for you to wag it so freely."

Surprised at having been thus recognized, and heedless of the warning, Nathan continued:

"Who are you? I never saw you before! What right have you to handle me in this fashion?"

"The right of any of his majesty's subjects, for in these times it is well to overhaul every rebel one runs across."

"I'm no rebel!" Nathan cried, now exhibiting signs of alarm.

"Your father is, which amounts to the same thing," the man replied, as, after having satisfied himself the lad had nothing concealed about his person, he rose to his feet. "Why are you abroad to-day?"

"How long since is it that a lad may not move about as he wishes?"

"Since rebellion first showed its head in these colonies. Now, answer my question, or it will be the worse for you!"

Isaac, thoroughly alarmed, had made no resistance either by word or movement when the stranger searched him, and although ignorant, as he had often said, of warfare, he understood now full well that they were fallen into the hands of enemies, who would not hesitate at the taking of human life in order to compass their ends.

Therefore he remained stretched upon the ground as when the men first came upon them, so terrified that it was almost impossible either to move or speak.

Young Beman was frightened, but not to such an extent as to prevent him from displaying anger, and instead of replying to the question he attempted to rise to his feet.

A blow delivered with unnecessary force

sent him headlong to the ground again, and his captor said warningly:

"Have a care what you are about, Nathan Beman, for we are not disposed either to bandy words or waste much time on such as you, who, having professed friendship for those in the fort, was ready to betray them."

Now, Nathan's fears were as great as Isaac's; but he made one more effort at asserting himself, and began by telling a lie.

"What have I done at the fort? I am but just come from my father's house."

"Take that for the falsehood, and this for believing us to be fools, who can be deceived by such as you," the man replied as he viciously kicked the boy twice. "You have but just come from Ticonderoga, and must have been sent by the rebels who captured the fort."

"What reason have you for saying that?" Nathan asked in a more subdued tone.

"First, the fact of your being here, and secondly because your comrade spoke, while we were within hearing, of your having been sent from Ticonderoga."

Nathan shot an angry glance toward Isaac as if Corporal 'Lige's recruit alone was to blame for this unpleasant interruption to the journey; but he ventured no reply lest further chastisement might follow.

"Tell me to whom you are sent, and have a care in the replying, for we are not minded to waste much time upon such as you."

Nathan was beginning to understand that he was wholly in the power of an enemy, whom he could not readily deceive, and also believed that it might be painful for him if the answer was delayed.

He was not so devoted to the cause as to

be willing to suffer in its behalf, and, therefore, said surlily:

"We were going to Captain Remember Baker at Sudbury."

"Who sent you?"

"Colonel Allen."

"Where is the message you are carrying?"

"He gave us none save by word of mouth."

"Repeat it, and be careful lest you make the mistake of telling another lie."

"There is nothing in it of importance or interest to you. It was simply that Captain Baker should come at once to Ticonderoga."

"Then the fort was taken last night?"

"I thought you knew that?" Nathan cried in surprise, now understanding that he had divulged what it was most important should have been kept a profound secret until Crown Point had been captured.

"We heard that the rebels were marching

toward the fort; but could not get there in time to warn the commandant."

"Why was it you made prisoners of two boys if you were not knowing to all that has taken place?" Nathan asked, his curiosity getting the better of his fears.

"We took the chance that you could give us the desired information, because it was not reasonable old Beman's son should be in this section unless on business of his father's, and in these times one can well guess what that business might be. Therefore, having heard you floundering through the thicket, we drew near to listen to such conversation as you might indulge in."

"Are you going to waste time explaining our purpose to that young cub, Jason Wentworth?" one of the men asked impatiently, and he who had been addressed replied with a laugh:

"We are not in as much haste now as we were half an hour ago, Ezra Jones. Captain Baker will not get the message, and while the wind holds in this quarter I'm allowing the rebels won't reach Crown Point before we do."

"They will if we loiter here all day. Truss up the lads, so they can do no mischief, and let us be off."

"Would you leave them here in the thicket, Ezra Jones?"

"Why not?"

"They might starve to death, and while I'm willing to serve the king in all things, it is not my intent to be thus barbarous."

"They can make themselves heard if any one passes by on the trail," the third man replied very carelessly, and Ezra added quickly:

"Ay! I had not thought of that. They

must be gagged, or, what may be better for us, shot offhand."

"Are you willing to kill two boys in cold blood, Ezra Jones?"

There was no reply to this question, and Jason Wentworth turned round to the other man.

"Matthew White, will you take it upon yourself to do what is little less than murder?"

"No; carry them further into the thicket, where they cannot be heard from the trail, and there tie them up."

"It were better we shot them at once, than leave them to starve," Jason Wentworth said much as if speaking to himself, and during this conversation the feelings of the two lads can be faintly imagined.

The question of their death by bullet or starvation was being discussed in such a

business-like manner, as if there was no alternative, that the boys were literally paralyzed with fear.

It seemed to Isaac Rice as if the three men remained silent fully five minutes before Jason Wentworth spoke again, and then it was with the air of one who has decided some vexed question.

"I'm not willing to play the part of a savage," he said, speaking slowly in order to give his words due weight. "Neither do I propose that they shall carry the message. We'll take them with us."

"And thus we shall be caused much delay," Ezra Jones muttered.

"If they are wise we will travel as rapidly as when alone, and in case of a refusal to obey orders they can be shot, or left to starve, as easily half an hour hence as now. Besides, there will be much work at the oars

'twixt here and Crown Point, and they can do a little more than their share of it."

Perhaps it was this last suggestion which caused the other two men to agree to the proposition.

At all events, no further objection was made, and Master Wentworth took it upon himself to direct the march of the prisoners.

"You are to keep half a dozen paces in advance, and take good care there is no loitering, or any attempt at giving us the slip," he said to the boys, who yet lay upon the ground. "I do not propose that you shall be starved to death; but at the same time I would put a musket-ball into one or both of you without compunction, rather than suffer delay or escape. Now get on your feet, and move lively, for only by obedience can you save your lives."

There was no disposition on the part of

Colonel Allen's messengers to run counter to the command which had been given.

Each knew full well that two of their three captors were in favor of leaving them to a most cruel death, which could be escaped only by prompt acquiescence to all the orders given.

Therefore it was they leaped to their feet quickly, and set forward at a sharp pace, when Jason Wentworth pointed out the direction to be pursued.

At this moment it was Isaac who suffered most in mind, for he knew full well that Corporal 'Lige would condemn him for not having the courage to face death rather than give information to the enemy.

Even though it was Nathan who had divulged what should have been kept a secret, the raw recruit knew in his own heart he had agreed that the information should be

given, because of having made no protest.

If Seth Warner failed in his purpose, it would be owing in a certain degree to what had been told these men, and Isaac, who had hoped to win renown, if not glory, by enlisting, could charge himself with what was worse than a blunder.

On the other hand Nathan was not sore in mind because of the possibility that Crown Point might still be held by the king's troops; but he had sufficient sense to understand that if he had retraced his steps along the shore to the trail, as Isaac proposed, this capture might not have been made.

Therefore, but in a different fashion, was his mental trouble as great as that of his comrade.

To the chagrin of both the boys they came upon the trail leading from the lake to

Sudbury, after not more than two or three minutes' traveling, and thus knew that if their halt had been delayed a very short time it might have been possible to have given these enemies the slip.

Once on the trail word was given to halt, and the three men held a brief consultation as to the course they should pursue.

One was in favor of going directly to the shore, where it appeared they believed a boat could be found; but the others insisted on keeping within the thicket until they were arrived a mile or more above the fort, lest, being seen, pursuit should be made by those who had captured Ticonderoga.

This last proposition prevailed, although there were many chances they might not find a boat further up the lake; but Jason Wentworth persisted it would be better if they make the journey entirely on foot, than take

the risk of being captured before word could be carried to Crown Point.

On being commanded to push forward once more the boys obeyed readily, if not willingly, and during the hour which elapsed before they gained the desired point, Nathan and Isaac had ample opportunity for conversation, since their captors did not seem to be averse to their talking one with the other.

"Of course, we shall be held prisoners by the king's troops once we are arrived at Crown Point," Isaac ventured to say after they had traveled steadily, although slowly, onward for nearly half an hour, and young Beman replied in a petulant tone:

"That goes without saying, and it shows what a fool I've been in running around with those who would oppose the king's will. If father is eager to ruin himself, that's no

reason I should be a fool, and I'd better have listened to mother."

"Why speak of what has been done?" Corporal 'Lige's recruit asked in what he intended should be a soothing tone. "I am not acquainted with the country as you are, neither am I so brave; but yet it seems as if we should be on the alert for a chance to escape."

"Now you talk like a fool! How may we escape with these three men on watch, all of whom are willing to shoot us at the first chance we give them. I'm not minded to have a bullet put through my body; but would rather trust to the king's troops, in the hope that after a time we may be set free."

"Yet if we could give these men the slip?"

"You may be certain we shan't have a chance."

"Yet, suppose we did?"

"Why will you be so weak-headed, Isaac Rice? If this is really war between the king and the colonies, the lives of boys like us count for but little, especially since two of these men are eager to be rid of us."

Isaac understood that it was useless just at this time to make any attempt at arousing his companion from the petulant despondency into which he had fallen, wherefore wisely kept silent; but at the same time was firmly resolved to be on the lookout for any opportunity of gaining his freedom.

His timorousness had fled before the thought that there might yet be a chance, he knew not how, of preventing the information of the fall of Ticonderoga from being carried to Crown Point.

The boy had in his heart just then what is commonly called courage, and his will was

good, at whatever cost to himself, to repair the mischief which had been done.

He had hoped to animate his companion to the same pitch, but the failure to do this did not discourage him, and while obeying strictly the orders given, he was keenly aware of everything which might be of benefit.

He heard the men discussing what they would do in case of a failure to find a boat near by where they gained the shore, and learned that in such an event one of them would return to the landing-place to get the craft of which they knew, with the idea that a single oarsman would not be molested while pulling leisurely up stream as if bent on business of his own.

He also understood that it was the purpose of his captors, after warning the garrison at Crown Point, to muster a force of Loyalists

from the immediate vicinity, and march into Sudbury with the idea of taking Captain Baker and his men prisoners before a second messenger should be sent from Ticonderoga.

There seemed little hope that such information could avail him, and yet he was in a certain degree elated because of having gained it.

On arriving at the shore of the lake, where the men had thought it possible a boat might be found, no craft of any kind was to be seen.

The wind still held strongly from the north, and Jason Wentworth announced in a tone of satisfaction:

"The rebels won't get very far on their journey toward Crown Point this day, and I am mistaken if the wind doesn't freshen after sunset."

"It will be precious hard work for us to make our way against such a breeze," Ezra Jones grumbled.

"Ay; but we can do it with four oars out, and even though we pull at them twenty-four hours, the labor should count as nothing so that we arrive in good time."

"But the garrison there is weak?"

"They should be able to hold out until assistance can arrive. We can muster fifty men for them within two hours; but standing here talking isn't doing the work, and it's important we set off without unnecessary delay. Ezra, you go down the shore, and Matthew up, each searching for a boat, and when one has been found pull to this point, where I will stay with the prisoners."

"Is it to your mind that I shall take the craft from opposite the fort, running the risk of being overhauled?"

"Better that than remain here wasting time in talk."

Matthew White was of the opinion that it would be wisest to make the journey afoot rather than take the risk of being overhauled by the "rebels;" but to this Master Wentworth would not listen, and, he evidently being the leader of the party, carried his point.

The two men set out, and immediately after their departure Jason Wentworth ordered his prisoners back into the underbrush a short distance from the shore, where he stood guard over them, and at the same time could keep close watch for the return of his companions.

CHAPTER IX.

A BOLD STROKE.

ISAAC's heart beat hard and fast when he and Nathan were thus left with but a single man to guard them, for he believed the time had come when they might succeed in turning the tables, because surely it would be easier to overpower one than three.

In this, however, he soon came to understand that he was mistaken.

Had either of the others been left on guard it is possible something might have been done; but Jason Wentworth was not a man to be caught napping, and while he seemingly directed his gaze out over the waters, at the slightest movement of either of the

prisoners he was on the alert against an attempt at escape.

Twice had Isaac changed his position in order to make certain the man was keeping close watch upon them when his attention was apparently directed elsewhere, and each time he saw Master Wentworth's musket raised that it might be ready in case a bullet was needed to check the flight of his captives.

"You had better not try that again," the man said warningly when Isaac shifted his position the third time for no other reason than to make himself more comfortable. "In a case like this your lives count as nothing, and while I am unwilling to leave you to starve in the woods, I shall not hesitate to kill either or both, therefore do not make any feint at giving me the slip lest my patience should become exhausted."

After that Isaac was exceedingly careful, as was young Beman, to remain silent and motionless.

While Corporal 'Lige's recruit was ready to encounter serious danger in order to accomplish his ends, there was no idea in his mind of risking life needlessly when there was nothing to be gained.

Young Beman lay face downward, as he had thrown himself when the halt was called, giving no heed to the conversation between his comrade and Master Wentworth, and Isaac believed young Beman intended for him to understand that he would take no part in an effort to effect their release.

An hour passed and nothing had been heard from the two who had gone in search of a boat.

It surely seemed as if they must have met

with some mishap, and a great hope sprang up in Isaac's breast.

When thirty minutes more had passed Master Wentworth's face gave evidence of the anxiety which had come upon him, and he looked toward his prisoners with such an odd expression that Isaac Rice trembled, fearing the man was beginning to believe it would be better to do with them as his friends had suggested.

Then, when it seemed impossible for Jason Wentworth longer to control his impatience, Master White returned as when he departed, and having the appearance of one who had walked far and rapidly.

"You found no boat?" Master Wentworth said interrogatively, and the man replied, as he seated himself wearily near by the prisoners:

"I do not believe there is one this side of

Crown Point. Most likely the rebels took good care to gather in every craft that was to be found within half a dozen miles of here."

For the first time since the little party came to a halt did Nathan evince any interest in what was going on around him, and now he partially turned as if to speak.

Isaac, believing he was on the point of telling what he knew regarding the seizure of boats, covered the boy's mouth with his hand, for he was not minded to give the enemy any information.

Master Wentworth observed the movement, and evidently would have demanded an explanation, but for the fact that at this moment Ezra Jones came up through the thicket, instead of along the shore.

His report was much like Master White's.

The boat he had expected to find near the

trail leading to Sudbury was missing, and he had continued on nearly two miles further, but without avail.

Again did hope come into Isaac's desponding breast.

The boy had believed Master Jones would surely find the craft in which he and Nathan had crossed the lake; but fortune favored the "rebel" cause in that respect at least, for the man must have turned about, when, by continuing on a very short distance further, he would have come upon that for which he was searching.

"We must go on foot," Master Wentworth said after a short pause, "and the sooner we set out the better."

"It's all very well for you, who have been resting here, to say that," Jones replied petulantly. "I've been making a road through the thicket for a matter of five miles

or more, and don't propose to move again until after I've had a breathing spell."

"Why didn't you come back by the shore, as you went?"

"Because there are a hundred pair of eyes watching this side of the lake. I could see the rebels on the opposite shore before I gained the trail, and then it was necessary to keep well hidden in the bushes. Even though I had found a boat, it is doubtful if I should have been allowed to pull up this way, for Seth Warner and Ethan Allen are much too keen to let any one pass who is headed in the direction of Crown Point."

"They are waiting for the wind to die away before setting out to take the fort, and if we would save it to the king it is time to be about the work," Master Wentworth said half to himself, but his comrades gave no heed to the words.

Then ensued a long time of silence, and Isaac was well content, for each moment of delay lessened the danger, as he believed.

Thanks to the indolence of Masters White and Jones, it was nearly nightfall before they were ready to begin the journey, and then the latter intimated that he had recovered from his fatigue.

"If we fail to give the warning in time, you and White can take the fault to yourselves," Master Wentworth said angrily, after which he ordered the prisoners on in advance once more.

"They have begun to quarrel among themselves, and perhaps our time will come before morning," Isaac whispered to Nathan as they pushed on in advance, and young Beman appeared more willing to listen than when the subject was first broached; but yet he made no reply.

An hour later night had fully come, and the flying clouds so completely obscured the sky that it was difficult for the travelers to make their way even along the shore where was nothing, save here and there a point of rocks, to impede the progress.

More than once did the boys walk directly into the water, and twice Master White fell headlong over a fallen tree, despite all efforts to the contrary, and then it was Jason Wentworth who proposed a halt.

"We are not making two miles an hour at this rate," he said in the tone of one who is offended with his companions. "We may as well stop where we are until it is light enough for us to see the way."

Nathan and Isaac came to a halt immediately, and, ordering them to keep close by his side, the leader of the party sought for a camping-place amid the shrubbery.

It was not possible to make any choice selection while it was so dark that one could not distinguish objects a dozen paces in advance, and at the first cleared space sufficiently large to admit of the men stretching out at full length, Master Wentworth made his preparations for the night.

He ordered the boys to lie down; covered them with four or five saplings, and on the ends of these he and Master White laid themselves in such manner that the first movement made by the prisoners must awaken the captors.

It was the Indian method of guarding captives; but, owing to the absence of robes or blankets with which to cover the ends of the saplings, those who lay on the outside had a most uncomfortable bed.

Isaac, still on the alert for any advantage, observed, rather by sense of hearing than of

sight, that Master Wentworth kept his musket close beside him, while the other two leaned their weapons against the bushes.

It seemed to Corporal 'Lige's recruit as if Nathan Beman had finally come to understand that escape might yet be possible, for the latter prodded his comrade with his elbow from time to time, as if to prevent him from falling asleep, and Isaac returned the pressure with vigor.

Then, when it appeared as if fully an hour had passed, the heavy breathing of the men told that they were fast asleep, and Nathan whispered cautiously:

"These fellows ain't so smart as I'd counted on. I've heard father tell how he outwitted the savages when they had him in the same kind of a trap, an' I can work this if you're ready."

"Begin at once; there is no time to lose."

Then it was that young Beman breathed loudly as if wrapped in profound slumber, and tossed about restlessly, all the while pressing against Master White.

Isaac did not understand the purpose of such maneuver, but he was content with knowing that his comrade had at last consented to make an effort toward escape.

More than once Master White partially awakened, and grumbled because of Nathan's restlessness; but at the same moment he unconsciously moved aside slightly, and each time he did this the prisoners were so much nearer liberty.

Then came the time when Nathan whispered:

"He has at last rolled off the saplings, and I can crawl away without disturbing him. Are you ready to follow?"

"Yes. Can't you get the muskets? Two

are near our feet, and the other is by the side of Wentworth."

"It is enough if we give them the slip."

"If we get possession of the muskets they cannot send a bullet after us in case one awakens before we are well off."

"I'll try it," Nathan replied as he began wriggling his body out from under the saplings, not daring to move in the direction of where Master White lay.

Isaac, literally trembling with excitement, followed his example, and it seemed to him as if half an hour had been consumed in the task, when really no more than five minutes were thus spent before the boys were on their feet and the men apparently still wrapped in slumber.

Even now Nathan would have made good his escape without an effort to secure the weapons, and pressed his comrade's arm to

intimate that there was no time to be lost; but Isaac, dropping to his hands and knees, crept toward Master Wentworth.

When the plan had so far succeeded that they were on their feet, a bold scheme came into Isaac's head, and he believed now was come the time for him to gain the good opinion of Corporal 'Lige, if he should be so fortunate as to see the old soldier again.

Moving with infinite care, and giving no heed to what Nathan might be doing, the boy crept to Master Wentworth's side, and it was with difficulty he repressed a cry of exultation as his fingers closed over the musket.

Cautiously rising to his feet, and at the same instant assuring himself the flint was in place, but forgetting that he had no powder with which to prime the weapon, Isaac stepped back to where he had left his comrade.

Nathan was no longer there, but from a short distance away came a slight rustling of the foliage, and Isaac waited, his heart beating so violently that it seemed positive the thumping must awaken their enemies.

Before Corporal 'Lige's recruit could have counted twenty, Nathan stood by his side, and it needed but one touch of the hand to tell the former that all the weapons had been secured.

Young Beman had done his work well, for he not only held the two muskets, but a powder-horn well filled, and a shot pouch heavy with bullets.

Now it was that, having all the advantage, Nathan began to be sensible of a glow of patriotism, and he whispered to his comrade as he carefully primed one of the muskets:

"It wouldn't be a hard task to take these

fellows into Sudbury, if we had something with which to fetter their hands."

"My mother made the cloth of this coat I am wearing, and I promise that it's as strong as a rope."

Without waiting for a reply Isaac began stripping the garment into narrow bands, by aid of his teeth, and the noise caused Master Wentworth to half rise as he cried:

"Hey! White! Jones!"

"Stay where you are!" Nathan shouted. "We've got all the muskets, and are in the mood to shoot if you make any trouble. It won't go much against the grain to put a couple of bullets into the two who wanted to leave us trussed up in the thicket, where we would starve to death!"

Master Wentworth sank back upon the ground very quickly, and at the same instant must have discovered that his ammunition

had not been seized, for he cried to his companions:

"They can't prime the muskets, and it is the same——"

"You'll know whether we can or not if you make any move! Don't think we were such fools as to forget that part of the business! I've got all the powder and balls that'll be needed to give you three a solid dose. Tie Master Wentworth's hands behind his back, Isaac, and if he so much as winks while you are doing it I'll quiet him. Lie down!" he added fiercely as in the dim light he saw one of the others attempting to rise. "If you make any fuss we'll shoot first an' talk afterward!"

It was more than probable one of the men might, because of the darkness, have gotten off without injury; but each knew that should such an attempt be made Nathan

could shoot down perhaps two of the party, and each probably feared it might be himself who would receive the bullet.

Therefore it was that they obeyed young Beman's orders strictly, and as soon as might be Master Wentworth was lying on his face with both hands tied securely behind his back.

To fetter the others in the same fashion was neither a long nor a difficult task, because, like the bullies they were, both showed the white feather when danger threatened their precious selves, and no more than fifteen minutes had elapsed from the time Nathan first set about making the attempt at escape before the prisoners were powerless for harm.

With their hands thus securely lashed behind them, it was impossible for the men to rise without assistance, and while Nathan

stood with the musket raised that he might shoot at the first show of resistance, Isaac helped the prisoners to their feet.

"Now it is you three who will obey our orders, instead of knocking us about," Young Beman said gleefully, "and I'll make the same threat Master Wentworth did: At the first show of trying to escape, I'll shoot, an' even though it is dark, there's little chance of missing aim, for we shall keep close in the rear. Take one musket, Isaac, and the other we'll leave here, rather than hamper ourselves by too much of a burden."

"Do you count on trying to make your way through the thicket while it is so dark?" Ezra Jones asked in a surly tone.

"That's what we shall do."

"Then you may as well shoot us offhand, for if it was hard work when we were free, what chance have we with our hands tied?"

"If you think that is the best plan I'll follow your advice, and never so much as wince in the doing of it, for you was one who would have left us to starve," Nathan said so promptly that the man involuntarily ducked his head as if fearing a bullet might follow the words.

"Where are you bent on taking us?" Jason Wentworth asked, after he had somewhat recovered his composure.

"Our orders were to go to Sudbury, and I think we'd better keep on in that direction, rather than lose time by carrying you to Ticonderoga. We could do that last if we pleased, for our boat is hidden among the bushes nearabout where Master Jones turned back. What say you, Isaac Rice? Is it to be Sudbury, or the fort?"

"It is best we see Captain Baker as soon as may be, and if you think we can find our

way through the woods, I'll say nothing against a short cut, for time presses."

The prisoners were driven like sheep, both boys marching directly behind them with leveled muskets, and, as may be expected, the advance was exceedingly slow.

The men stumbled over fallen trees, and each of them fell headlong half a dozen times before the seemingly long night came to an end; but still they were urged on at the best possible pace until sunrise, when a brief halt was made.

Two hours after the journey had been resumed the trail was found, and from that time on until the outskirts of the settlement was gained, the party marched at a reasonably rapid rate of speed.

Once a glimpse of Sudbury was had Isaac became exceedingly prudent, and insisted upon calling a halt, while Nathan declared

they should press forward until the prisoners could be delivered to Captain Baker.

"I shan't feel comfortable in mind until all three are off our hands, for there's no knowing how many friends they may have in the settlement."

"That is exactly why I would halt here," Isaac replied, and Corporal 'Lige would have rejoiced had he known how rapidly his recruit was learning his duties as a soldier. "We do not know in which house Captain Baker lives, and while making inquiries, still having the prisoners with us, we might come upon those who would turn the tables once more, before we had so much as gained speech with the officer."

"Then what would you do?"

"We are within less than half a mile of the settlement. Let us march the prisoners into the thicket, where they will be hidden from

view of any who may come this way, and while one stands guard over them, the other can seek out the captain. After that has been done he can take charge of the affair, and our work will be well and thoroughly done."

"Who is to remain here?" Nathan asked.

"It shall be as you say."

Young Beman remained silent a moment, and then, with the air of one who has decided an important question, said:

"You shall go into the settlement, and if either of these Tories so much as opens his mouth while you are gone, I'll put a bullet through him."

"And you must not hesitate to carry out that threat," Isaac added firmly. "Now is come the time when we may prevent any news from being carried to Crown Point, and at the same moment deliver Colonel Allen's

message, therefore blood must be spilled if necessary."

Jones and White looked thoroughly alarmed, while Jason Wentworth said approvingly:

"You lads are in the right, from your own standpoint, which is a wrong one, however; but since we have been so dull as to let you get the best of us, is is but proper we should pay the penalty for disobeying orders."

"Will you give us your word not to make an outcry if any person should pass by on the trail?" Isaac quietly, having no little respect for this enemy who could look upon the situation so fairly.

"If by giving up my life I can prevent the capture of Crown Point, you may be certain I shall not hesitate."

Isaac looked significantly at Nathan, as if to say that this man should be guarded more

closely than the others, and after the prisoners had been marched into the thicket, where they were completely hidden from view, Corporal 'Lige's recruit set out, Nathan calling after him:

"Do not loiter by the way, either in going or coming, for I am not quite at my ease while alone."

"Have no fear I shall delay. It should not be a long task to find Captain Baker, and most likely you'll see me again in less than an hour. Keep your wits about you, and remember how much mischief may be done if you hesitate to shoot when it becomes necessary to do so."

CHAPTER X.

CROWN POINT.

NEVER since the moment when Corporal 'Lige had promised to make a soldier of him, had Isaac Rice been as happy as now.

He had atoned for the mistake made when they first set out on the journey, although it was really none of his, and, in addition to having prevented the news of what had been done at Ticonderoga from being carried to Crown Point, had as prisoners three who could have made no slight amount of trouble for the colonists.

Surely the old corporal would praise Nathan and himself, and he glowed with pride as he thought of the report he could make on his return to the fort.

"Of course Nathan Beman has as big a share in this work as I, and it is his right; but I know it was not me who grew faint-hearted when we were in the power of the enemy, an' there's a deal of satisfaction in that thought."

On arriving at Sudbury, half an hour after having left his comrade, Isaac made inquiries for Captain Baker's dwelling, and learned that had Nathan's proposition been carried out, they would have been forced to parade the prisoners through the entire settlement before coming upon the house.

The captain was within sound of his wife's voice when Isaac finally stood before the good woman asking to see her husband, and came up quickly; but with a look of disappointment on his face when he saw his visitor was only a boy.

"Is this Captain Remember Baker?" Cor-

poral 'Lige's recruit asked, for he was not minded any mistake should be made now that his work was so nearly accomplished.

"Yes; what do you want?"

"I am come from Colonel Allen——"

"Where is he?" the captain asked eagerly.

"That I may not tell you until we are alone."

"Come into the house! Come in and refresh yourself, and you shall tell me that with which you are charged while partaking of such food as my wife can prepare quickly."

"It is not well for me to spend time in eating until after Nathan Beman is relieved from his charge."

"What have you to do with that young Tory, if it is true that you come from Ethan Allen?" and now the captain began to show signs of being suspicious.

"I will tell the whole story, beginning with the capture of Ticonderoga——"

"So the fort has been taken by our people!" Captain Baker cried joyously as he clasped the messenger by the hand with such force as to make the boy wince. "Tell me quickly! When was the work done?"

More than once before he had come to the story of his and Nathan's adventures was Isaac interrupted by the eager soldier; but after a certain time he succeeded in imparting all the information, and was rewarded by hearing the captain say:

"You showed rare good sense in leaving the prisoners outside the settlement, for while we in Sudbury are with the colonists in their task of teaching the king a much-needed lesson, there are some who might have tried to work mischief had you applied to them asking the location of my dwelling. Wait

"SO THE FORT HAS BEEN TAKEN BY OUR PEOPLE!" CAPTAIN BAKER CRIED, CLASPING THE MESSENGER BY THE HAND.

Corporal 'Lige's Recruit, p. 232.

here until I can summon a few of the Green Mountain Boys, who have been awaiting word from Ethan Allen, and we'll soon relieve you of the Tories."

Captain Baker ran out, not stopping for a reply, and while he was absent his wife insisted on Isaac's eating such food as she had already prepared, until it seemed to the boy that he would not need anything more for twenty-four hours.

Then six men, each armed with a musket, arrived, and were ushered into the house, and Isaac was called upon to tell once more of how Ticonderoga had been captured, after which the party set out to find the prisoners.

Corporal 'Lige's recruit acted the part of guide, and in less than an hour the three Tories, having been given a liberal supply of cornbread, were being marched back on the trail toward the captured fort.

Both Isaac and Nathan believed it was their duty to accompany the prisoners; but Captain Baker insisted that they remain at his home in order to gain the repose which was needed, promising that they should arrive at Ticonderoga nearly as soon as if they had gone with the company escorting the Tories.

Therefore it was the boys remained, well content with the work they had performed, and not until the morning of the twelfth of May was the return journey begun.

Then the wind was blowing gently from the southward, and Nathan said mournfully:

"We have of a surety lost the chance of going to Crown Point, for the hunter will be up and doing this morning, and is likely well on his way by this time."

Overhearing his words the captain added:

"Ay, lad if he didn't get there yesterday,

which I misdoubt, you may count that he started before daybreak this morning; but you can have the satisfaction of knowing that save for your work, his task might not be so easy."

"Think you he can surprise the garrison?" Isaac asked.

"I see no reason why it should not be done, especially after your capture of the Tories, for thus far Colonel Allen has succeeded in keeping his movements a secret, at least from the people in this section of the country, and why may you not say the same of Crown Point?"

To the surprise of the boys no less than twenty men were assembled in front of Captain Baker's house by the time breakfast had been eaten, and on making inquiry Isaac learned that these were all of the Green Mountain Boys who had been ordered by

their leader to rendezvous at Sudbury until summoned elsewhere.

The company, under command of Captain Baker, took up the line of march over an old trail through the woods, marching to a point on the shore of the lake nearly two miles further down from where the boys had landed, when they came from the fort.

There, snugly hidden in the thicket ready for just such an emergency as had already come, were found four stout boats, each capable of carrying not less than a dozen men, and after all were embarked and the little fleet pushed off from the shore, it appeared quite formidable.

Each craft boasted of a sail, and with the wind from the southward there was no need of labor at the oars, therefore this portion of the journey promised to be most pleasant.

"This is different from what we expected

when Master Wentworth marched us in front of his musket,'' Isaac said in a tone of content, and his comrade replied:

"We got out of a small hole in fine style."

It was when they were midway from the point of embarkation to Fort Ticonderoga that young Beman cried excitedly, pointing toward that shore which they had just quitted, where could be seen two small boats laden with men who were pulling into a cove as if seeking shelter:

"It looks to me as if those fellows are wearing red coats!"

It was the first intimation Captain Baker had that there were others in the immediate vicinity, and instantly he gave word for the boats to be hauled around for the purpose of learning who these strangers were.

Hardly had this maneuver been executed

when one of the men announced positively that young Beman was right in his conjecture.

"They are most likely Britishers, who escaped from Ticonderoga, or have come from Crown Point on their way to St. John in search of reinforcements," Captain Baker cried excitedly, and orders were given for the men to take to the oars.

Then ensued a chase which was quickly ended, owing to the precaution taken by the Britishers themselves.

They had put into the cove hoping to escape detection, and it proved to be a trap for them.

No sooner were the boats arrived off this place of refuge than Captain Baker gave orders for them to be strung out in line, thus cutting off all hope of escape by water, and in his own craft pulled near to where the two

boats, manned by seven soldiers, were drawn up as if prepared to do battle.

It was soon evident they understood well the truth of the old adage that "discretion is the better part of valor," for immediately Captain Baker called upon them to surrender, they threw their arms into the bottom of the boat in token of submission.

Nathan was most grievously disappointed. He had fancied there might be a skirmish, or at least an exchange of shots, for until the morning when Ticonderoga was taken so readily he had believed the king's soldiers to be invincible, and even now he was not prepared to see them surrender to a force little more than four times their number.

The prisoners readily answered the questions put by the captain.

They were from Crown Point, and having learned of the surrender of Ticonderoga had

been dispatched by the sergeant in command of the garrison, for reinforcements.

They stated, in addition, that it was not believed those who had taken Ticonderoga would push on to Crown Point immediately, consequently plenty of time remained in which that post might be reinforced. Therefore it was the sergeant in command had not hesitated to weaken his small garrison by thus sending seven men on a mission which might more readily have been accomplished by one.

"There is yet time for us to do Seth Warner a good turn," Captain Baker cried sufficiently loud for all his men to hear. "It is more than likely the garrison at Crown Point will hold out when the Green Mountain Boys demand its surrender, believing reinforcements are, or speedily will be, on the way. Now, instead of stopping at Ticonderoga, our

plan is to push directly on to the fort, and when it is known that we have captured the messengers I reckon the fortification will be surrendered with but little parley."

Although the captain had thus spoken as if making a suggestion, his men understood that his words were little short of a command, and after transferring the prisoners the fleet was gotten under way.

Thanks to the freshening wind the boats were soon making good time in the race to overtake the force led by Seth Warner.

"And it is to be Crown Point for us, after all!" Nathan cried exultantly, whereat, hearing the words, Captain Baker asked:

"What is your name, lad?"

"Nathan Beman from Shoreham."

"So? I knew your father was on the right side; but understood that you and your mother were hardly to be trusted."

"I cannot say anything for mother; but since I have seen the king's soldiers surrender so readily I am with the Green Mountain Boys and those who share their opinions."

"When you are so nearly with them as to enlist, come to me, lad, and I will give you a musket in the best company that can be found this side of Cambridge."

Isaac looked at his new friend reproachfully, and the latter said with a laugh:

"I know all you are thinking; but when I enlist, and it ain't certain but that I shall do so soon if the people continue to hold out against the king, I propose to set my name down for that company to which you belong."

"Do so when we go back to the fort," Isaac cried gleefully, "and side by side you and I will see many a brave adventure."

"But the trouble is we may see more than will be pleasing, though I truly believe I shall enlist."

"And Corporal 'Lige shall teach us both a soldier's duty."

This proposition apparently did not meet with favor, for Nathan at once changed the subject of the conversation by inquiring regarding the probable condition of affairs at Crown Point, after which the boys listened to the conversation of their companions as they spoke of Lexington and Concord, and of what should be done to avenge the murders committed there.

And now it came to pass that these two lads were most grievously disappointed in their anticipations concerning the capture of the fort.

Probably each had in his mind the thought that he was to see somewhat of war, more at

least than had been witnessed at Ticonderoga; but it was not to be.

As the little fleet approached the point, Warner and his men were just disembarking.

Although Captain Baker's party was but a mile away at that time, when they gained the shore the garrison had been surrendered without the firing of a gun, and the booming of the cannon told that again were the "imitation soldiers" successful in their efforts to teach his majesty a lesson.

One hundred and fourteen cannon, of which sixty-one were fit for service, were among the spoils on this morning, and after having made up a list of such goods as were found in the fort, Seth Warner did the two lads the great favor of sending them to Colonel Allen with the news of the bloodless victory.

"Go you on ahead, lads," Captain Baker

said when the boys had been intrusted with the message. "I won't spoil a good fortune by seeming to accompany you; but will linger here until you are well on the way, and after having given Ethan Allen the best news he could possibly receive at such a critical time, I very much question whether you may not ask whatsoever you will from him."

Hurriedly the messengers departed in order that they might arrive well in advance of Captain Baker's company, and when they were pulling down the lake, Isaac said thoughtfully:

"You heard what Captain Baker said, that Colonel Allen might grant anything we asked?"

"Yes, and I know what is in your mind this minute."

"Name it then."

"You think I am counting on asking him for money."

Isaac's face flushed and he made no reply.

"I might have done so a few days ago, but now I am coming around on the same track with father, and say that the colonists do right in resisting the king. If it so be he permits, I will enlist this day."

And Nathan Beman kept his promise, even going so far as to desire Corporal 'Lige should stand sponsor for him when, the message having been delivered, Colonel Allen thanked them again and again for the cheering intelligence and asked what they would choose as their reward.

"Only the permission to enlist," Nathan said, and the colonel stared at him in open-mouthed astonishment for several seconds, after which he asked with a laugh:

"Are you not the same lad who so thirsted

for money that he refused to show the way into the fort unless first paid for his services?"

"Ay, sir; but I have come to think differently since then, and now I'm going for a soldier, because it looks to me as if the colonists would speedily worst the king."

"Whereas a few days ago it appeared to you that the boot was on the other foot?"

"I did not think farmers could be turned into soldiers, sir."

"You may readily believe it now, lad, more especially since you have seen how easy it is for one who was almost a royalist to become a good American, and now I am speaking of yourself. Enlist wherever you will, and I will take it upon myself to see that both you lads rise in the service as rapidly as you shall deserve."

CHAPTER XI.

RE-ENLISTMENT.

It will be remembered that Isaac wrote his mother stating he had seen quite enough of a military life, and this he declared before having experienced the most disagreeable of his adventures.

Now that Nathan had decided to show himself a faithful son of the colonies, however, and was minded to enlist in the same company of which Isaac was a member, the case wore a different aspect, although there was much about it which caused the latter many misgivings.

In the first place, it appeared as if young Beman was ready to sign the rolls in order that he might be with Isaac; and Master Rice

questioned if, under such circumstances, he would not be bound to remain in the army for so long a time as Nathan chose to play the soldier.

Although Corporal 'Lige's recruit had had only a limited experience, he knew enough by this time to understand that he was likely at any moment to suffer hardships, or be called upon to venture into such dangers as the captors of Ticonderoga and Crown Point had never known.

It was only natural that, in his perplexity, he should turn to that fountain head of military knowledge, Corporal 'Lige, for assistance.

He did not propose, however, that Nathan Beman should have an inkling of what was in his mind; and when the two were come from the interview with Colonel Allen, Isaac said with an assumption of carelessness:

"Now that I have the opportunity, it would be a good idea to ask the corporal's advice about writing home, and if you are minded to look about you a bit, I'll hunt him up."

"I was countin' on havin' a look at the different companies," Nathan replied, betraying no suspicion that his comrade might desire to leave him for the time being. "The colonel has much the same as promised to give us a lift in whatsoever direction we desire, an' it may be we would find it more for our advantage to seek other companions-in-arms than those who come from Pittsfield. We can take our choice now, whereas, once havin' signed the rolls, others will have the power to make the choice for us."

Isaac had no idea of leaving the neighbors with whom he had enlisted; but Nathan's proposition, if carried out, would insure his

being left alone with Corporal 'Lige for a time: and he apparently committed himself to the suggestion.

While the newly discovered friend of the colonies sauntered away to make his inspection, Master Rice hurried off to find the corporal, a task which was speedily brought to a successful conclusion.

"I hope, lad, it ain't in your mind to leave the service," Corporal 'Lige said in a tone of real solicitude when the boy had given words to his misgivings. "It isn't for me to say that you're in any way a soldier as yet; but it's in my mind that if I can have the handlin' of you a year or so, you'll show yourself such a recruit as I can look on with pride."

"But once Nathan Beman has enlisted, an' in the same company with me, I'll be bound to stay in the service so long as he does," Isaac replied doubtfully.

"Well, an' why shouldn't you? If these 'ere colonies are countin' on settin' themselves agin' the king—an' they've gone so far now that I don't see how it's possible to back down unless we who have had a hand in this little venture are given up to be hanged as traitors—lads like you will be needed."

"There are plenty of old soldiers, such as you, Corporal 'Lige, an' boys of my age won't count."

"They wouldn't if we could shove the king's troops to the wall in other parts of the colonies, as we have here at Ticonderoga and Crown Point. But it ain't goin' to be sich smooth sailin' everywhere, lad. The Britishers will wake up to the fact that we're in earnest, an' then hard work must be done. A good many of us will get a full dose of English lead, an' you young ones should be ready to take our places."

"Do you mean that there'll be more fightin' than we've seen already?" and now Isaac's voice trembled woefully.

"Bless your heart, lad, we haven't had any yet; but it's bound to come before you're many months older."

Master Rice no longer attempted to repress his fears.

"I couldn't cut any figger at fightin', Corporal 'Lige! Why, I never fired a gun in real anger, except the time when those Tories had you in a tight place."

"All that may be true, lad; but then you did it with sich purpose as to get the best of three villains in grand shape. I couldn't have done better myself, an' them as know Corporal 'Lige, will tell you I'm sayin' a good deal in them words."

Even honest praise, was notenough, at that moment, to arouse Isaac's patriotism.

On the day when he left Pittsfield, such words from the corporal would have fired him for any venture, however hazardous; but now he understood a trifle better what was meant by becoming a soldier, and could no longer blind his eyes to the real danger by dreams of glory.

Had Master Rice been left to his own inclinations just then, he would have asked of Colonel Allen permission to return home, and gone at once as rapidly as his legs would carry him, even though forced to travel alone; but Corporal 'Lige had no idea of allowing this one recruit to leave the service.

After exhausting all the arguments he could bring to his aid, chiefest among which was the possible fact that those who had taken part in the capture of Ticonderoga and Crown Point might be hanged as traitors if the cause of freedom was allowed to lan-

guish, he said, as if a sudden and happy thought had come to mind:

"If you could see real soldiers, lad, instead of this crowd of loud-mouthed boasters who must be licked into shape before they're even in condition to be shot at, the matter would look different. That boy, Isaac Beman, was right when he laughed at our people, because he'd often met them as served the king; but we've got as good material among us as any his majesty can muster. Now, hark ye, Isaac Rice! At Cambridge you might see men from the colonies such as would make you proud!"

"But I'm not likely to go to Cambridge," the boy interrupted mournfully.

"There's nothin' stands in your way, if it so chances you've the mind to go. Colonel Allen is bound to say 'yes' to whatsoever you ask. Now how would it do if you should

speak to him somethin' like this: 'If you please, sir, Corporal 'Lige is needed down Cambridge way, seein's how there's like to be hot work 'round about Boston, an' he'd want me an' young Beman to go with him. If you'll send us there with news of what's been done in this section of the country, we'll sign the rolls with him in whatsoever regiment that needs him most.' I reckon a little speech like that would tickle the colonel mightily; you'd have a chance to see the country, to say nothin' of Boston, an' I'll venture to predict that you an' Nathan might be wearin' swords when the people up this way clapped eyes on you again."

This was the most alluring proposition the old soldier could have made, and he understood such fact full well when the boy immediately gave himself up to thought, instead of replying.

Corporal 'Lige was not minded to trust to this one suggestion. He artfully drew pictures of camp-life to be enjoyed with a well-disciplined, well-regulated army; spoke of the wonderful sights to be seen near about Boston, and dwelt long upon the possibility that recruits like Isaac and Nathan would soon be made officers, because Colonel Allen had much the same as promised such advancement.

Some time before Master Beman had concluded his inspection of the different military organizations represented within the encampment, Isaac was eager to follow the suggestion made by the old corporal, and impatient because Nathan did not come, for, as a matter of course, the proposition must receive his sanction before being fully decided upon.

When the lad from Shoreham finally pre-

sented himself there was on his face an expression of decided dissatisfaction, and before either Corporal 'Lige or Isaac could speak, he said petulantly:

"There's no sense in thinkin' that these men here are soldiers! There ain't one of 'em who can hold a candle to the poorest man Captain Delaplace had under his command. If I'm goin' to enlist, I'd like to be with a crowd that I'm not ashamed to look at.

"There's a good deal of truth in what you say, lad," the corporal replied, and Master Beman gazed at him in surprise, for he had not expected to receive such ready assent to his criticism, particularly from the old soldier. "Isaac an' I have been talkin' about that same matter."

"There ain't much use in *your* kickin' up a row about it, seein's how you've enlisted with 'em."

"All that is true," the corporal replied in his blandest tones; "but yet we might be able to take service in another regiment. I've laid this 'ere plan before my recruit, an' he thinks it's a good idee."

Then the old man set about winning Nathan over to his way of thinking, by painting the same pictures which had been approved of by Isaac, and the latter aided him materially in the task, until it could readily be seen that young Beman was deeply interested.

"It's only necessary for you lads to go to the colonel as I've said, an' the thing will be arranged in a twinklin'," Corporal 'Lige added in conclusion, and then, believing his work to be finished, he leaned back and filled his pipe with great deliberation; but keeping close watch upon his two companions lest their conversation should take such a turn

as might result in the upsetting of his plans.

Young Beman was not minded to commit himself to the scheme without first understanding all the details.

He was ready to show his patriotism by enlisting to serve the colonies as a soldier; but at the same time he intended to get from such devotion the greatest amount of money possible.

Therefore his first question was regarding the pay that a soldier would receive, and on this point Corporal 'Lige soon convinced him that he should refrain from signing the rolls until arriving at Cambridge, or, wherever the Massachusetts Committee of Safety might chance to be.

"You have seen how generously they fitted out Colonel Arnold," he said with a wave of the hand as if to show that the capture of the

post had been brought about through the agency of the munitions of war supplied by the committee. "There you'll find an army, and, after signing the rolls, can be certain of receivin' all the pay promised; but here it is different. This 'ere little expedition is what might almost be called an outside matter, an' it don't stand to reason that any of us can count on gettin' much money till after we've been reg'larly mustered into the army."

"I'll go with you," Nathan said most decidedly.

"I'm allowin' you'll want to talk with your father."

"He's willin' for me to turn soldier, an' it can't make any difference to him whether I do it here, or at Cambridge."

"But what about your mother?" Isaac asked, thinking of his own home, and wishing most fervently that he could visit it be-

fore shutting himself off from all hope of so doing in the near future.

"She won't say very much after I tell her the money'll be paid when it's been earned, though I s'pose she'll fuss some."

"Do you want to see her before we talk with the colonel?"

"No; so long as father's willin' I reckon we'd better fix matters so I can't back out," Nathan replied carelessly, and Corporal 'Lige, believing it best to arrange all the business while the lads were in a complaisant mood, suggested that they have a talk with Colonel Allen at once.

Nathan immediately made very decided objections to stating the case as the old soldier had proposed.

"What's the use of tryin' to make the colonel believe that the people at Cambridge can't get along without Corporal 'Lige?" he

asked in a tone which brought a frown to the old man's face. "We'll tell him just what we've been talkin' about, an' if he won't agree, I'll go off alone, 'cause I don't count on servin' with sich a crowd as you've got here."

The corporal would have set his face against being thus relegated to the background, but for the fear that in urging his claims for prominence Master Beman would decide not to join them, and after a few feeble protests, mainly to the effect that their object could best be attained by giving the commander to understand how greatly the army at Cambridge would be benefited by his presence, he held his peace, leaving Nathan to manage the interview after his own fashion.

And this young Beman did without any false modesty.

When the two lads gained an interview with Colonel Allen, Nathan took upon himself the part of spokesman, and did not hesitate to declare that, while agreeing to serve the colonies, he desired to receive the largest possible pay for such service, therefore proposed to go to Cambridge.

"Corporal 'Lige is willin' to go with us, if you'll let him an' me off from the enlistment," Isaac added timidly. "They need him down there, an' perhaps he wouldn't go if it wasn't to look after us."

"I can take care of myself," Nathan interrupted; " but if the old man wants to go it's no business of mine, though I reckon the folks there ain't in any very great pain because he don't come right away."

Colonel Allen listened without comment to the request of the boys, and when it had been fully made, said gravely:

"It shall be as you say, although I could wish that all three were going with no other thought than that of aiding the cause of freedom. You may set out whenever Corporal Watkins is ready, and I will see to it that you are supplied with such an outfit as he shall deem necessary."

"When shall we get the stuff?" Nathan asked, eager to have in his possession all that the commander was willing to give him for the trip.

"Corporal Watkins shall act as commissary. Tell him to come here within the hour, and the necessary arrangements can be made with but little delay. I will not forget the promise to see that you rise in the service according to your deserts, and in return ask that both bear well in mind all that may be accomplished by the work of such as you, forgetting the money to be earned, in the

knowledge that a country is to be wrested from the hands of its oppressors."

With this the interview was brought to a close, and Nathan said, when he and Isaac were in the open air:

"It would have suited me better if he'd said less about the corporal! That old man thinks he's——"

"Please don't say anything against him," Isaac interrupted pleadingly. "You don't know what a good friend he is, and as for bein' a soldier, that's proven by the way all the officers talk about him."

Young Beman was not minded to give Corporal 'Lige any credit whatsoever, because of the sharp manner in which the old soldier had addressed him more than once; but yet he repeated faithfully all Colonel Allen had said, when the three were together again.

"I'm to see him within the hour, eh?" and

the corporal set about cleaning his uniform of red with the most scrupulous care. "Then he understands that I may be needed down Boston way."

"He didn't say anything of the kind," Nathan replied quickly. "I reckon it was thought you ought to have the handlin' of what's to be given us, because you're the oldest, an' that's where Colonel Allen is makin' a big mistake. I haven't got a red coat; but I'll bet a shillin' that I can take as good care of the stuff as you."

"We won't have overly much talk on that score, young Beman," Corporal 'Lige replied sternly, and Isaac was overwhelmed with astonishment because he had such control over his temper. "It may be that one or the other of us will have a chance to change his opinion before we're come to Cambridge, for it'll be a decently long journey."

Then the old man gave all his attention to making himself presentable for the coming interview, and Isaac assisted him in so far as was possible.

While Corporal 'Lige was absent Nathan amused himself with speculations as to what adventures might befall them after they were regular soldiers, and Master Rice did his best to give the lad a more favorable opinion of the old man who was to be their comrade.

"Everybody likes the corporal," he said mildly.

"I don't, 'cause he thinks himself such a terrible good soldier, an' can't show up very much."

"He worked mighty hard gettin' the boats together."

"Yes, an' put on a lot of airs when the colonel told him to chase after me."

"He was only actin' accordin' to orders."

"Perhaps he was, an' then again perhaps he wasn't," Master Beman replied curtly, and realizing from this vague remark why the lad from Shoreham was so bitter in his criticisms, Isaac gave over trying to bring about a better understanding between his comrades.

CHAPTER XII.

AN ENCOUNTER.

BEFORE this day was come to a close young Beman understood that Corporal 'Lige might possibly be a trifle better informed on military matters than he had given him credit for; at least, so far as understanding how to get together an outfit for such a journey as lay before them.

When the old soldier returned from the interview with Colonel Allen, it was with the written authority to take from the stores of the captured fort such articles as might be needed for himself and his two recruits, and he allowed the lads to accompany him while making the selection.

That he knew full well what might be needed while on a long march, and at the same time could avoid "overloading," was shown when this or that article of equipment had been suggested by the lads, and accepted or rejected with reasons which might well be understood.

When Corporal 'Lige had gathered the outfit together, Nathan was not only well content, but ready to admit that the selection was a wise one, particularly after the old man had clad his young recruits in two of the king's uniforms noticeable for elaborate trimmings rather than suitable shape.

Arrayed in a coat of red, with long boots coming considerably higher than the knee, and breeches of white that hung in folds around his legs, Nathan believed he was in proper trim to break the news of the sudden departure to his mother. He felt certain he

looked every inch a soldier, and was ready to forgive the corporal for any harsh words, because of such an outfit.

"I'll go home now, an' you can count on seein' me in less than two hours," he said as he departed, carrying over his shoulder a musket that appeared literally to weigh him down. "She'll be mightily surprised to see me rigged like this, an' won't have a word to say against my goin'."

And Nathan kept his word in regard to returning; but Isaac observed that he did not swagger quite as much as when he departed.

"What did your mother say?" Corporal 'Lige asked with a certain twinkle of the eyes which told that he anticipated the answer.

"She would have it that I looked like a fool, an' said if them as counted on fightin' against the king was all fixed out like me,

we'd make sich an army as never'd been seen before."

"Perhaps she was right," and Corporal 'Lige tightened his belt in order that a certain suspicion of a wrinkle might not be seen. "Did she make any objection to your goin' to Cambridge?"

"No, because I told her we'd surely be paid reg'lar wages; but I had to promise that I'd come back the first day the money wasn't put into my hand."

"It ain't altogether certain you'll be allowed so much voice in the matter as that," Corporal 'Lige replied grimly; "but it can be tried, an' perhaps once tryin' will be enough for you."

After Nathan's return there was nothing to delay those who would journey to Cambridge.

Colonel Allen had given Corporal 'Lige

such a letter as would insure him a favorable reception, and the sooner the three left the fort the better were their chances for a safe journey.

Therefore it was that this addition to the colonial forces set out within two hours of sunset, Nathan promising to conduct them to a most pleasant and convenient camping place before the night had fully come, from which point they would be able to start next morning with the assurance that there was but little danger of an attack by those who were enemies to the cause of freedom through being the king's devoted servants.

"There are twenty or more 'round here who made a good thing out of sellin' garden-stuff to the king's soldiers, an' they don't think very much of this business of bein' free," Nathan explained when he was urging that they lose no time in beginning the journey.

"It may be they'd try to make trouble for us; but once we're a dozen miles from this place everything will be all right. If we stay in the fort till mornin', the folks might come to hear of what we count on doin', so the quicker we leave the better."

Corporal 'Lige declared himself in favor of departing at the earliest practicable moment, and thus it was the three left Ticonderoga within two hours of nightfall, with no one to take leave of them save Mr. Beman, and he addressed the greater portion of his parting words to Nathan.

"Try to remember that you are agreein' to help free the colonies, an' forget that your chief aim in life is to get a shilling," he said when the three set out, ferrying themselves across in one of the boats that had been seized for the purpose of transporting the troops. "It is a noble cause in which you

have embarked, and of that you should never lose sight."

"I'll stay so long as the wages are paid on time," Nathan replied, and Corporal 'Lige indulged in an expressive wink which was directed toward Isaac; but that recruit failed entirely to understand the meaning of it.

Nathan was a good guide, as he had previously given evidence, and his comrades found it necessary to walk at their utmost speed in order to keep pace with him as he led the way through the forest wherein Master Rice failed of seeing the slightest trail.

The sun was yet half an hour high in the heavens when young Beman halted in front of a rude shanty standing amid a clump of pine trees, so completely hidden from view that one ignorant of its location, might have passed within a dozen yards and failed of seeing it.

"Here's where we'll stay all night," he announced, throwing off the burden he carried and giving vent to a sigh of relief. "From this place until we are come to Cambridge there is nothin' to fear, an' we can take matters with more of leisure."

"Do you count that we're safe here from them who serve the king?" Corporal 'Lige asked, surveying the halting place with no slight degree of pleasure, for it was fair to see, with the stately pines enclosing it as by a curtain, and a dancing brook winding past the very door of the shanty.

"If you were as certain of knowin' all about soldierin' as I am that we're safe here, I allow they'd make you a colonel, at the very least, within an hour after we struck Cambridge," Nathan replied confidently, and although the corporal's face crimsoned with anger at the pert reply, he held his peace.

Isaac, fearing lest his comrades might indulge in speeches so sharp as to lead to a quarrel, set about building a fire that the evening meal might be prepared in an appetizing manner, and urged Nathan to aid him in the task.

The old soldier left the boys thus engaged, and after an absence of half an hour returned with two partridges and a rabbit, making of them a stew so savory while cooking that Master Beman unconsciously spoke to him in a more respectful fashion while it was thus being prepared.

This halt in the woods where, as he had been assured, there was no cause for fear, was much to the liking of Isaac Rice, and straightway he looked upon the plan of journeying to Cambridge to join the army with more of favor than he had previously felt.

Even Nathan was impressed by the tran-

quillity of the place, and during the time spent in cooking and eating the supper the three were on such friendly terms that a stranger would have said nothing of an unpleasant nature had ever come between them.

When supper had been eaten, and his pipe of tobacco smoked, the corporal suggested that they decide as to the order of standing guard, saying by way of explanation:

"Of course we must keep up somethin' of military order when we make camp, otherwise it'll look as if we were like to make poor soldiers, for one who don't care for himself can't be depended upon to watch over others."

"What's the use of puttin' on so many airs?" Nathan asked petulantly. "I tell you there ain't the least little bit of danger here, not if every man for a dozen miles about was huntin' after us."

"I'm ready to take the risk if you are," the corporal replied with the air of one who is weary with much wrangling, and straightway he laid down inside the shanty; but Isaac observed that the old man was careful to have his musket and ammunition where they might be come at handily.

Master Beman disposed of himself near the camp fire, for the night air was chilling, and Isaac laid down by the side of the old soldier.

There was every reason why the little party should speedily give way to slumber, and it was to Master Rice as if he had no more than stretched himself out at full length before he journeyed into dreamland; but only to be awakened shortly by a series of screams such as seemed to betoken most intense suffering.

"What's the matter?" he cried, springing

to his feet in alarm, and before it was possible to speak another word Corporal 'Lige's hand was upon his lips.

"Be quiet, lad," the old man whispered. "Young Beman has learned by this time that it might have been well had we kept proper guard."

"Where is he?"

"Yonder, in the thicket, I should say by the sound of his voice. There must have been enemies nigh at hand when we made camp, an' Nathan put himself where they could get hold of him without much trouble."

"It's our duty to help the poor lad," Isaac said hurriedly, seizing his musket and ammunition, and he might have run out but that the old man prevented him.

"Wait a bit till we can see how many there are against us! You would only be

serving the enemy by rushin' out in that fashion. I've shut the door, and whoever has made the attack must come in front of the fire to get at us, which won't be a safe move unless I've forgotten how to use this old musket."

Meanwhile Nathan continued to scream loudly for help, and, peering out through the crevices of the shanty, Isaac saw first Wentworth, then Jones, and, lastly, White—the three men who had made them prioners when they were sent from Ticonderoga to summon Captain Remember Baker.

"They'll kill him sure!" the boy whispered in terror, and then he explained who made up the attacking party. "It must be that they have escaped from Captain Baker's men, and, perhaps, sought this very hiding place! We must help Nathan, Corporal 'Lige, even at the expense of our own lives."

"That much I'm willin' to grant you, lad; but I'm not countin' on rushin' blindly out. We'll wait for a chance when the odds are in our favor, which they're not just now.

"Can't we shoot the men down?"

"That's what I'd like to do, an' it couldn't be counted as real killin', seein's they are Tories. If you get a chance when there's no possibility of missin' the aim, let go; but if we shoot at random they'll take good care, after the first shot, to keep out of range."

It seemed much as if the enemy overheard this conversation, for although Isaac kept close watch from that instant, he failed to see one of the men again, although it was certain they remained in the immediate vicinity of the shanty, because Nathan appealed for help now and then, in the most agonizing tones.

It was not difficult for an old campaigner

like Corporal Watkins to have a very good idea of the situation without asking many questions.

These men who would have carried to Crown Point news of Ticonderoga's capture, had escaped from those who should have held them close prisoners, and, wholly by accident, the three who journeyed toward Cambridge had come upon them.

Save for Nathan's insistence that a guard was wholly unnecessary, the men would not have found it such a smiple matter to gain revenge; but, seeing a fair opportunity, they had, most likely, taken advantage of it, with the result that the one member of the party who laughed at ordinary precautions for safety was a prisoner.

Perhaps the old soldier was not unwilling that Nathan should suffer some little distress of mind, for instead of taking immediate

steps toward aiding the lad, as seemed to Isaac imperative, Corporal 'Lige remained near the door on the lookout, as if concerned only for his own safety.

"They'll kill the poor lad!" Master Rice cried, trying in vain to catch a glimpse of the attacking party through a crevice in the hut. "Can't you do anything, corporal?"

"He ain't very near death while it is possible for him to yell so loud," the old soldier replied grimly. "I reckon we can serve him a good turn later; but jest now it stands us in hand to get a fair idee as to how the land lays before we take too many chances."

"Help! Help or they'll murder me!" Nathan cried at the full strength of his lungs; but yet Corporal 'Lige made no move toward answering the appeal until fully fifteen minutes had passed, and the lad's cries sounded more faintly, when he said sharply:

"I reckon the Tories have given up the idea of gettin' hold of us, an' are movin' away. Now has come the time when we must make a move!"

"What shall I do?" and Isaac seized his musket as he began to unbar the door.

"Stay where you are, lad. If I can't get the best of three scurvy Tories who know as little about warfare as those fellows appear to, then it's time I gave over tryin' to play the part of a soldier. I'll go outside, an' you're to hold on here ready to make a break whenever I give the signal."

Without further explanations, although it seemed to Isaac that more were needed, the corporal unbarred the door silently, and disappeared amid the foliage, for by this time it was so dark in the thicket that one could not distinguish objects half a dozen feet distant.

It was not at all to Master Rice's liking, this standing guard alone, with the chance that an enemy might pounce upon him at any moment; but he could not well do otherwise, and after five minutes had elapsed, during which time not the slightest sound was heard, he began to fear that the Tories had succeeded in dragging Nathan away beyond reach of help.

Then, suddenly, although he had been listening for it, came the report of a musket; he heard the corporal's voice, and even while he was speaking, the report of a second weapon.

After that all was still while one might have counted fifty, and it seemed to Isaac as if each second was of a full minute's duration.

Then a third report; a loud cry, and immediately afterward the voice of the old soldier as he shouted:

"It's all right, Isaac; I reckon you won't be troubled with Tories again this night."

It was necessary for him to wait at least five minutes more before the sounds as of a heavy body forcing a passage through the underbrush came as a most welcome relief, and shortly afterward Nathan and Corporal 'Lige were standing in front of the door.

When they had been admitted, and Master Beman was somewhat recovered from the fright into which he had been plunged by his sudden and unexpected capture, Isaac heard the entire story.

According to Nathan's account he had had a most thrilling escape from death, and it certainly seemed as if a certain portion of his story was true.

It appears that the lad, having laid down near the camp fire in the most exposed position, was aroused to find himself in the hands

of two men, who seemed bent only on dragging him a safe distance from the camp. On the instant he recognized his captors as Jason Wentworth and Ezra Jones—two of the three who had been taken prisoners to Sudbury, and it was only natural he should anticipate the most cruel treatment at their hands. He screamed for help, and continued to do so even after the men threatened him with instant death unless he remained quiet.

"I made up my mind that I'd be killed any how, whether I yelled or not, so kept on, thinkin' perhaps you hadn't heard me. I tell you, Isaac Rice, I had a mighty close shave, an' if it hadn't been for Corporal 'Lige, most likely I'd been dead by this time. I'm willin' to say right up and down that he comes nigh to bein' the best soldier I ever saw, and from this out I'm ready to dance to whatever tune he feels like whistlin'."

Nathan's story was finished, and Isaac turned toward the corporal asking for his, whereupon the old soldier said, with a quiet smile:

"There's nothin' much to tell, lad. When I went out the three Tories were edgin' off, thinkin' most likely that this wasn't a very healthy place in which to stay. I put a ball through the arm of one, an' the next villain shot at random; but his bullet didn't come within speakin' distance. After loadin' the musket again, an' the idjuts stood like scared chickens till it was done, I had 'em foul, when it was a question of doin' as I said. There wasn't any sense in our takin' prisoners, for we'd been forced to carry 'em back to Ticonderoga, so I peppered the second scoundrel, hittin' him in the shoulder, I reckon, an' give word for Nathan to be set loose. By this time they was ready to obey

orders, and you can believe every one made good time in gettin' out of range. If it hadn't been so dark I might have worked the game a bit different; but as it was, I run some chances of doin' more harm than good."

As a rule Corporal 'Lige was not averse to sounding his own praises; but now, when he had really done a brave deed—for it was no trifling matter to venture out in the darkness where were three armed men—he appeared unwilling to dwell upon the subject, and as soon as possible dismissed it by saying:

"It didn't amount to enough for us to talk about. We'll stand watch from this out, unless Nathan allows there's no need of it, an' them as ain't on duty had better get a little sleep."

"After this I'll never say 'no' when you say 'yes,'" Master Beman replied contritely, and certain it is from that hour there was

never an unpleasant word passed between the two; Nathan had become the firmest friend and most devoted admirer Corporal 'Lige ever had, not even excepting Isaac.

There is very much which might be told about these three, who from this evening became firm friends and comrades; but the time for continuing the tale is not now.

Some day, perhaps, the reader shall have an opportunity of learning what these recruits did after joining the Continental forces, and how far they were favored by Ethan Allen.

The purpose of this story was simply to relate the incidents having a direct bearing on the capture of Crown Point and Ticonderoga, in which they took part, and, that having been done, it only remains to write

THE END.

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